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the avengers

REVIEW
PAGE 8



THE INDEPENDENT

13,696

SATURDAY 22 AUGUST 1998

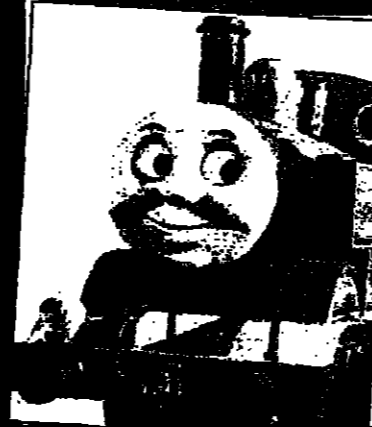
(TR65p) 70p

THE MAGAZINE



HOWARD JACOBSON
ON THE
BARMAIDS OF
THE OUTBACK

WEEKEND REVIEW



THOMAS
THE CULT
ENGINE
PARENTS
BE WARNED

YOUR MONEY



**THEY HAVE
WAYS OF
MAKING
YOU TALK**
MOBILE
PHONE WARS

Now America is braced for the backlash

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

AMERICA YESTERDAY pledged itself to a new crusade against terrorism, even as its missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan were greeted with a huge and potentially threatening backlash.

"This is going to be a long term battle against terrorists who have declared war on the United States," Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State said yesterday morning. "That is what Osama bin Laden did. He made clear that all Americans and American facilities were potential targets."

Washington warned there would be more strikes on groups that threaten the US. "I do not rule anything out," said Sandy Berger, the National Security Adviser.

The US said it believed the missiles had done their jobs, though because of cloud cover it said immediate assessments were limited. "I think we've done some considerable damage to the camps," Mr Berger said.

The target was infrastructure in the two countries, not individuals, Ms Albright said. "I think we have made a considerable dent in that."

Opinion polls showed 66 per cent of the American public backed the attacks and 19 per cent opposed them; but 36 per cent believed that President Bill Clinton launched the missiles to distract from his problems in Washington over his relationship with Monica Lewinsky. The US launched 70 missiles

INSIDE



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at sites in Afghanistan from ships in the Arabian Sea, and six from the Red Sea at a factory in the Sudan capital Khartoum, which America contends was a chemical weapons plant and the Sudanese say was a pharmaceutical factory making antibiotics.

The casualty count, according to observers in Afghanistan, was between 11 and 21 dead, with dozens more wounded. Two training camps were destroyed, one of which was a base for a Kashmiri group, Harkat ul-Mujahedin, and five of the dead were said to be Pakistani.

Pakistan condemned the attack on Afghanistan, but the government retracted an earlier statement that a stray missile had struck its territory and killed five people. The retraction followed a telephone call by President Clinton to the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif.

But the attacks raised a firestorm of criticism in the Muslim world, with several groups threatening the US it would not be allowed to get

away with its actions. American airports were put on raised security alert, and Americans were warned about the risks of travelling in Muslim countries.

Britain advised against travelling to Sudan, and said visitors to Muslim countries should be cautious.

The militant Palestinian group Hamas called the strikes "state terrorism", and the organisation's founder, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, said "the United States will certainly harvest the fruits of its bloody aggression". Palestinians burned American flags on the West Bank, and the Stars and Stripes also burned in many other cities, including Khartoum, and Peshawar in Pakistan.

In Afghanistan, the backlash took concrete form as two Western aid workers were shot and wounded. The UN withdrew all expatriate aid workers from Afghanistan and also withdrew from Pakistan's North-West Frontier province.

Russia lashed out at America for launching the attacks without prior consultation. "I

am outraged and I denounce this," said Boris Yeltsin. "My attitude is indeed negative as it would be to any act of terrorism, military interference, failure to solve a problem through talks," he said.

The US received backing from its allies, including Britain, Germany, Egypt and Israel.

The Taliban forces in Afghanistan - paid and armed by America's Saudi allies - condemned the attack and refused to hand over Osama bin Laden, accused by Washington of being behind the bomb attacks on US embassies in Africa.

The Saudis themselves, who have kept discreet links with Mr bin Laden despite his declaration of a holy war against the US, gave no support to the American air strikes. Mr bin Laden, who has demanded the withdrawal of all US troops from the Arabian peninsula, himself maintains contact with several members of the Saudi royal family.

Most US embassy staff have now left Islamabad and diplomats continued to flee the region. All over the Arab world, US citizens have been warned by their government of the danger to their lives. In more than half of the Middle East land mass - in Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Somalia, Afghanistan and Libya - there is now no US diplomatic presence.

Mr Clinton may believe he is winning his war against "terrorism", but Mr bin Laden might be forgiven for thinking that America is on the run.

After Omagh, a symbol of hope



The Omagh bomb victim Nicola Emery, 21, cradles her daughter, who weighed in at 7lb 6oz on Thursday afternoon at South Tyrone Hospital in Dungannon. Ms Emery, a Protestant, was shopping last Saturday afternoon with her partner, Michael Mulholland, 17, a Catholic, and her mother, Valerie, when the bomb went off. All three were hurt - her mother seriously - in the blast, which killed 28 people and injured more than 200. Ms Emery said she hopes that her daughter can grow up safe in a world free from 'violence and terrorists'.

Picture: P. O'Connell

Russian panic sends shares tumbling around world

MORE THAN £34bn was wiped off the value of the stock market yesterday as fears about the impact of the crisis gripping Russia and worries about a backlash following Thursday's bombing of Sudan and Afghanistan by the United States sent financial markets into free fall around the world. In the City, the FTSE 100 index of leading shares closed

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

190.4 points down at 5,477, its biggest fall since the October 1987 crash, while on Wall Street the Dow Jones was trading more than 250 points off at 8,360.

Currencies in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe came under heavy selling pressure as investors who had been

caught on the hop by Russia's surprise devaluation of the rouble on Monday decided yesterday to cut and run.

The worry is that after crises over the past year in Korea, Indonesia, Japan, and now Russia, another major economy - most probably Hong Kong or China - may be about to blow.

"Markets are driven by fear and greed," said Bob Sample,

analyst at BT Alex Brown, a US investment bank. "They have got fear big time." He added: "There is more of this to come."

Dealers said that investors who had been buying heavily into these markets in the hope of spectacular returns had suddenly realised that after shelling out more than \$40bn (£24.7bn) in rescues around the world since last year's Asian crisis

broke, the International Monetary Fund has no more money in the kitty to bail them out.

They have also been spooked by the fact that the Russians were prepared to default on some of the obligations to foreign investors, although following pressure from some of the big foreign banks they have agreed to think again.

The Russian crisis has come

at a time of a deteriorating outlook for both the US and the British economies, which had already threatened to end a seven-year bull market in shares on both sides of the Atlantic.

Stock markets in Western Europe and Latin America were also sharply down. Investors were shifting massively into government bonds in the US and Western Europe, which were

seen as lower risk. The pound registered strong gains as worries about the domestic back-drop became less prominent.

Germany, which was under a cloud because of its banks' relatively high exposure to Russia, saw its stock market index, the Dax, fall by more than 4 per cent. Representatives of Germany's big banks met the Russian authorities yesterday.

"The appetite for risk in the world has gone to an all-time low," said Stuart Brown, head of emerging market research at Paribas, the French bank. "People are saying: 'we don't know where or when the next shock is going to come from - China? Hong Kong? more in Russia? Latin? - let's get out together.'"

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Contagion spreads, page 19

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Tony Blair confided he was "very close" to Catholicism, according to the Archbishop of Siena
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Surgeons have re-built a woman's hand after a factory accident by storing her finger on her arm
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Demand for university places is stronger than ever despite £1,000-a-year tuition fees, according to new figures
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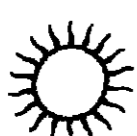
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With Rwanda warning it is prepared for war, Nelson Mandela made a desperate attempt to broker a peace deal
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The Prudential denied reports it was preparing to sack 1,000 sales staff
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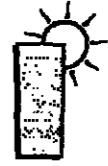
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Surrey increased their lead at the top of the County Championship with a seven-wicket win over Nottinghamshire
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SPORT
Tottenham have agreed a fee of £5.5m with Manchester United for the striker Ole Gunnar Solisjaer
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Bright with **PIMM'S** spells throughout the day.



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PRO retains 30-year-old files

Despite the Government's commitment to open government, thousands of documents are being withheld by the Public Record Office past the 30-year period. Page 8

Weldon launches new attack

The writer Fay Weldon has launched her strongest critique of feminism to date, claiming yesterday that the feminist revolution was now stripping men of their dignity. Page 13

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Slave labour firms face payout

Fear of a Swiss banks-style public relations disaster for German businesses is forcing firms that used slave labour during the Third Reich to compensate their former workers. Page 15

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Crystal managers to share £26m

The management team at holiday company Crystal International Travel is to share a combined £26.5m after selling the business to Thomson Travel. Page 17

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Nicklaus Jr leads European

Gary Nicklaus, the 29-year-old son of Jack Nicklaus, shot a second-round 66 to be in with a chance of winning the European Open. Page 23

WEEKEND REVIEW 32-PAGE BROADSHEET SECTION

Terence Blacker

Some joke outrage of the Irvine Welsh/James Kelman school sneers at the toffee-nosed, Oxbridge-educated London literary establishment, and I know it's me. Page 5

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NEWSPAPER RECYCLING
100% OF THE PAPER IN THIS NEWSPAPER IS RECYCLED

Clinton finds himself back in favour

WITHIN AN hour of President Bill Clinton's announcement that he had ordered the strikes on targets in Afghanistan and Sudan, the political support that had been ebbing away so conspicuously since his admission of adultery and deceit less than 72 hours before came welling back.

From both sides of the congressional divide there was vocal approval: almost everyone wanted to be in on the act of a strong America exerting its power against the evil of international terrorism.

The change was most striking and immediate among Democrats, notably those with presidential aspirations. The House minority leader, Dick Gephardt, who had been incommunicado to the point of rejecting a US network's offer of a satellite link to broadcast his support for Mr Clinton from France earlier in the week, materialised to "commend the President" for protecting "American lives and interests".

His sentiments were echoed by Tom Daschle, the Senate minority leader, who had earlier expressed his "disappointment" with the President's conduct in the Monica Lewinsky affair.

Republicans, including the crusty chairman of the Senate foreign relations committee, Jesse Helms, also seized the chance to back a decisive projection of American power abroad. Had they not been urging the US to be tougher, with Iraq, with the embassy bombers? How could they not be supportive now?

Newt Gingrich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, who had withheld comment on Mr Clinton's personal discomfiture, said: "The US did exactly the right thing".

Orrin Hatch, the chairman of the Senate judiciary committee, who had pleaded with Mr Clinton to apologise to save the Republican majority Congress the embarrassment of having to impeach him, then called his admission "pathetic", was eloquent in his praise.

In so many respects, Mr Clinton's military strikes on indeterminate terrorists worked their predictable magic on a weakened leader and on recalcitrant politicians. Mr Clinton - shorn of authority in the White House Map Room on Monday - recouped his power among the flags and leadership totems of the Oval Office on Thursday, and Congress rallied round.

The Republican right, which had been assembling an anti-Clinton constituency of the morally concerned to press for his resignation, found itself back out on a limb.

By MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

Did they want a strong America? Of course. Did they want a flawed president? Well, no, but, as one put it: "We only have one President, and I support what he did."

With one (or two) flights of missiles, it seemed, Bill Clinton was free, or was he? He had reminded the world of America's military might and the President's capacity to use it. Absent or mealy-mouthed before, the Secretaries of Defense and State, the National Security Adviser and the chief of the joint staffs of the armed forces, appeared on cue to praise and defend the President's action.

This time, it was the response of the public, the same public that has kept Mr Clinton's presidential ratings above 60 per cent since the Lewinsky affair surfaced, that exposed his continuing weakness. It was not just jaded reporters and conspiratorial Republicans who questioned his motives and timing and raised the *Wag the Dog* scenario - the film about a fictitious war "fought" to save a President. It was people in workplaces across America whose first reaction to the attacks was a smirk of recognition.

Would he do it? Few were certain, but no one was prepared to rule out the possibility.

By PHIL REEVES
AND AGENCIES

problem through talks. I am outraged and I denounce this."

Elsewhere in the world, opinion was divided. Western European nations predictably supported the US action, although in a more lukewarm fashion than Britain, which backed Washington's stance unreservedly on Thursday.

France delayed an official reaction for 15 hours after the raids were announced and its wording hinted at pique that France, unlike Britain, was not told of the strikes beforehand.

"France takes note of the decision by US authorities who carried out yesterday's bombings and invoked the right to legitimate self-defence recognised by international law," a foreign ministry statement said.

In Peking, China announced simply that its "position of condemning all forms of terrorist activities is clear", while Muslim Indonesia said: "In the fight against terrorism, Indonesia cannot condone intervention or aggression towards sovereign nations."

Neighbouring Malaysia was more outspoken. Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamed called America a bully. Japan said it "understood"



Col Gaddafi joining an anti-US rally yesterday in Tripoli, where he led protests against the raids shouting 'Down with the USA'

Blair supports missile attacks

By PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

"A country such as the US, when its citizens are put under attack in this way and when they are at risk, must have the right to defend themselves and we support our allies in that cause."

Mr Blair was backed by Michael Howard, the Tories' foreign affairs spokesman, who said: "These terrorists are enemies of humanity. I do not think they should be given a free run."

However, the Liberal Democrat Menzies Campbell said the US should not expect a "blank cheque" from Britain for further military strikes.

RUSSIA'S LEADER declared he was "outraged" yesterday by United States' attacks in Afghanistan and Sudan and complained that he had received no advance warning.

In an outburst delivered with the jutting jaw he reserves for his more theatrical moments, Boris Yeltsin denounced US behaviour as "indecent". His condemnation came only 11 days before Bill Clinton is due in Moscow for a summit. Not being informed in advance has ranked with Mr Yeltsin, who said: "My attitude is indeed negative as it would be to any act of terrorism, military interference, or failure to solve a

Outraged Yeltsin denounces 'indecent' US behaviour

By PHIL REEVES
AND AGENCIES

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America's "resolute attitude against terrorism".

Public opinion in the Arab world and throughout the Middle East was mostly hostile to Washington. On the Israeli-occupied West Bank, hundreds of Palestinians chanted threats against President Clinton and burned US flags. In Tripoli, the Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi personally led a protest, shouting "Down with the USA".

Iran also condemned what it said was a violation of Sudan's national sovereignty. Tehran did not condemn the strikes on Afghanistan, however, as it has a poor relationship with the ruling Taliban militia.

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TOMORROW IN THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



Geoffrey Lean

Don't protect the badger

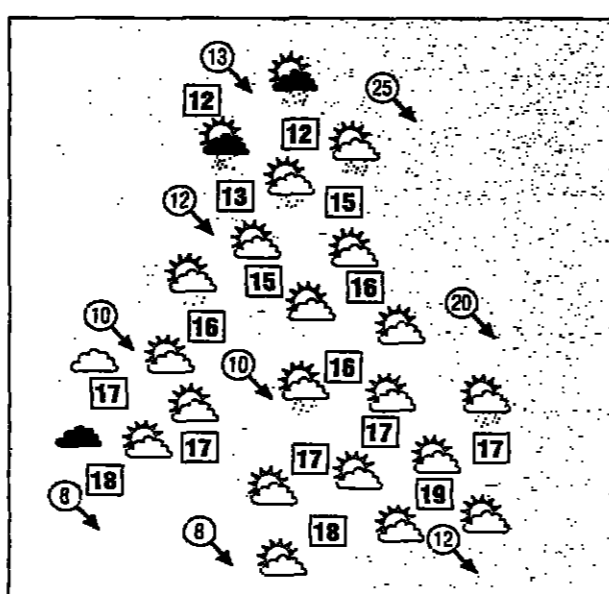
John Mortimer

The things we do to actresses

Joan Smith

Clinton, God, and the fear of sex

BRITAIN TODAY



FORECAST

General situation England and Wales will have sunny spells but it will be quite fresh with any showers chiefly confined to northern coasts and hills. Scotland will be cool and showery, although southern parts will escape most of the showers with better sunny spells.

London, SE & East of England: Sunny spells but feeling quite fresh. A light to moderate north-west wind. Max temp 18-21°C (64-70°F).

SE England, Midlands, East of England: Feeling fresh with the odd passing shower but some sunnier in between the showers. A moderate north-west wind. Max temp 17-20°C (63-68°F).

SW England, Channel: Glimmers of sunshine, but rather a lot of cloud with the risk of drizzly rain. A light north-west wind. Max temp 17-20°C (63-68°F).

Wales, NW England, Lake District, Isle of Man: Cool with sunny spells and only isolated hill and coastal showers. A light north-west wind. Max temp 15-18°C (59-64°F).

NI Ireland: Isolated showers and a few sunny spells. A light north-west wind. Max temp 16-19°C (61-66°F).

Wales & NW Scotland: In SE Wales rather cool and breezy with frequent showers and only limited sunshine in between. A fresh north-west wind. Max temp 12-15°C (54-59°F).

LIGHTING UP

Belfast	8.40pm	to	6.14am
Birmingham	8.18pm	to	6.03am
Bristol	8.19pm	to	6.06am
Glasgow	8.37pm	to	6.03am
London	8.09pm	to	5.58am
Manchester	8.23pm	to	6.02am
Newcastle	8.24pm	to	5.53am

HIGH TIDES

	AM	HT	PM	HT
Aberdeen	8.23	12.9	8.38	13.1
Blackpool	12.10	6.8	12.27	9.0
Cork	6.33	4.4	6.56	4.5
Dun Laoghaire	12.47	3.9	-	-
Edinburgh	6.34	5.0	6.44	5.2
Flint	8.21	4.54	8.38	4.79
Greenock	1.18	3.4	2.04	3.2
Hull	7.18	8.5	7.47	8.3
Liverpool	12.24	9.2	12.41	9.4
Millfield Haven	7.18	6.7	7.35	6.9
Newquay	12.09	6.7	12.26	6.9
Penzance	5.39	3.3	5.57	3.5
Portsmouth	9.31	4.8	9.46	5.0
Portland	7.38	1.8	8.06	2.1
Swansea	9.11	4.2	9.27	4.5
Torquay	11.51	8.1	12.08	8.3
Scarborough	4.57	3.7	5.25	3.9
Southampton	11.57	4.5	12.12	4.7
Swanage	9.42	1.9	9.48	1.9
Wick	12.33	3.4	12.44	3.6

AIR QUALITY

	NO ₂	O ₃
London	Moderate	Good
SE England	Moderate	Good
Wales	Good	Good
C. England	Good	Good
N. England	Good	Good
Scotland	Good	Good
N. Ireland	Good	Good

SUN & MOON

Sun rises:	05.57
Sun sets:	20.09
Moon rises:	06.12
Moon sets:	20.22
New moon:	Today

WEATHERLINE

For the latest forecasts dial 0800 5009 followed by the two digits for your area. Source: The Met. Office. Calls charged at

OUTLOOK

Sunday will be cool but generally dry and bright. Eastern areas will keep some sunshine but it will cloud over as rain spreads over western areas by the afternoon. Monday will be cool and showery but Tuesday should become drier and

TRAVEL

Readers: London: M1/A12 link road. Vari-ous restrictions in place. Until 31st December 1999. West Midlands: M5 between J5 (Bham west) and J2 (Dudley). Resurfacing work with narrow lanes both ways. Until 12th October. West Yorkshire: M1 between J43 Skarston and J62 (Leeds interchange) (M62). Roadworks with 50mph speed limit. Until 1st November. Buckinghamshire: A40 between junctions 1a (M25) & 3 Wycombe East. Three narrow lanes both ways and a 50 mph speed limit in force. Until 1st January 1999. Berkshire: M4 between J99 Maidenhead and J7 Slough. New road layout with a 50mph speed limit in a new full-mile carriageway during road relief work. Until 20th November. Bristol: M5 J18-19. Major Roadworks on Avonmouth Bridge. Until 1st January 2001. All Roadworks: Call 0344 601777 for the latest local and national traffic news. Source: The Automobile Association. Calls charged at 50p per min (inc

YESTERDAY

EXTREMES

Warmest: Bognor Regis 23C (73F)
Cooldest: Kinloch 11C (52F)
West Coast: Capel Curig 1.22 in
Sunniest: Isle of Wight 7.0 hours

For 24hrs to 7pm Thursday

	Sun	Mon	Tue	Max	Min
Aberdeen	6.7	0.0	2.0	68	68
Angus	0.4	0.0	1.7	63	63
Ardara	6.4	0.0	1.9	66	66
Belfast	0.4	0.0	1.6	61	61
Birmingham	3.7	0.0	1.8	64	64
Bournemouth	6.6	0.0	1.7	66	66
Bristol	5.0	0.0	1.8	64	64
Cardiff	3.1	0.0	1.7	63	63
Cardre	0.0	0.0	1.6	64	64
Claon	0.0	0.0	1.7	60	60
Cromer	6.7	0.0	2.1	70	70
Edinburgh	0.7	0.0	1.7	63	63
Exmouth	4.3	0.0	2.1	70	70
Flint	3.0	0.0	1.7	63	63
Folkestone	0.2	0.0	1.8	66	66
Glasgow	0.2	0.3	1.9	59	59
Hastings	7.4	0.0	2.0	68	68
Hove	5.4	0.0	2.0	68	68
Isle of Man	1.0	0.0	1.7	63	63
Isle of Wight	5.9	0.0	2.0	68	68
Jersey	0.0	0.0	2.1	70	70
Leamington	0.0	0.0	1.6	62	62
Leeds	0.8	0.0	1.8	64	64
Lewish	0.7	0.2	1.8	65	65
Littlehampton	7.5	0.0	2.1	70	70
Lowestoft	2.3	0.0	2.2	72	72
Manchester	3.2	0.0	1.9	66	66
Margate	7.4	0.0	2.3	73	73
Morcambe	6.2	0.0	2.2	70	70
Newcastle	0.0	0.0	1.8	64	64
Newquay	2.4	0.0	1.9	66	66
Norwich	6.2	0.0	2.2	70	70
Oxford	5.0	0.0	1.9	66	66
Rose-on-rye	4.4	0.0	1.9	66	66
Salisbury	3.0	0.0	2.0	68	68
Scarborough	1.1	0.0	1.7	61	61
Shrewsbury	2.2	0.0	1.8	64	64
Southport	8.7	0.0	1.7	63	63
Stornoway	3.5	0.0	1.5	72	72
Swanage	5.4	0.0	2.0	68	68
Torquay	0.4	0.0	1.8	64	64
Weymouth	4.6	0.0	2.0	68	68
Weymouth-mare	6.6	0.0	2.0	68	68

24 hours to 6pm (GMT) Thursday

Information by PA WeatherCentre

WEATHER STORY

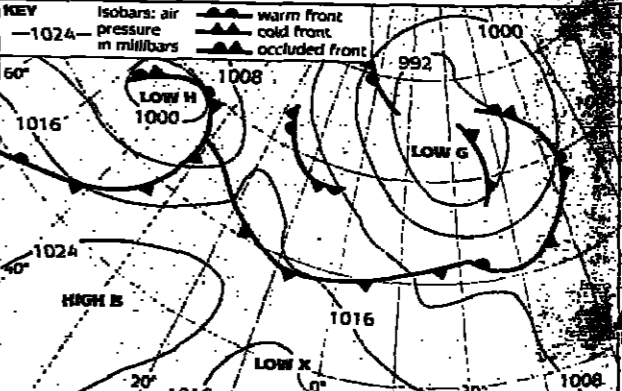
The debate on global warming is expected to heat up as scientists have revealed that more regions of the Earth are experiencing more unusual weather conditions than 30 years ago. Climate researchers have found more drought in Africa and Asia and an increase in both extremely wet and extremely dry areas in Europe and the United States.

THE WORLD

EUROPE NOON TODAY



THE ATLANTIC NOON TODAY



High B is almost stationary. Low G will fill as it edges north-eastwards. Low H will move steadily eastwards. Heat-low X is slow moving.

THE WORLD YESTERDAY

TODAY			YESTERDAY		
City	°C	°F	City	°C	°F
Abidjan	26	79	Madrid	21	70
Algiers	30	86	Moscow	18	64
Amsterdam	16	61	Nairobi	22	72
Ankara	13	55	Paris	18	64
Athens	22	72	Rome	21	70
Bahia	27	81	Sao Paulo	24	75
Bangkok	32	90	Seoul	21	70
Barcelona	27	81	Shanghai	28	82
Berlin	18	64	Singapore	31	88
Bombay	30	86	Sydney	22	72
Buenos Aires	20	68	Taipei	28	82
Calcutta	30	86	Tokyo	24	75
Cairo	32	90	Ulaanbaatar	18	64
Cardiff	18	64	Vancouver	22	72
Cebu	30	86	Warsaw	20	68
Chengdu	18	64	Wellington	18	64
Chicago	17	63	Zurich	21	68
Colombo	30	86			
Copenhagen	18	64			
Dakar	27	81			
Dallas	20	68			
Dhaka	32	90			
Dublin	18	64			
Edinburgh	18	64			
Geneva	20	68			
Hankow	28	82			
Hong Kong	29	84			
Houston	20	68			
Indianapolis	18	64			
Jakarta	30	86			
Johannesburg	20	68			
Kobe	18	64			
London	17	63			
Los Angeles	20	68			
Lyons	18	64			
Manila	30	86			
Mexico City	20	68			
Moscow	18	64			
Mumbai	30	86			
Nairobi	22	72			
Paris	18	64			
Peking	28	82			
Perth	18	64			
Rangoon	30	86			
Rio de Janeiro	24	75			
Rome	21	70			
Sao Paulo	24	75			
Seoul	21	70			
Shanghai	28	82			
Singapore	31	88			
Sydney	22	72			
Taipei	28	82			
Tokyo	24	75			
Ulaanbaatar	18	64			
Vancouver	22	72			
Warsaw	20	68			
Wellington	18	64			
Zurich	21	68			

The US says this was a weapons plant. Sudan says it made drugs. Who's right?

THE UNITED STATES says it has "compelling evidence" that Osama bin Laden knows who exploded two bombs at its Nairobi and Dar es Salaam embassies, and that this lay behind its missile attacks on Thursday.

Yet it has not so far produced any evidence at all, leaving some strange questions hanging over the episode.

These centre on Osama bin Laden, the man who has suddenly been elevated from a "shadowy figure" in the netherworld of radical Islam to the status of "the pre-eminent organiser and financier of international terrorism in the world today," as President Bill Clinton described him on Thursday.

Not a scrap of evidence has been produced against him; and America insists he was not the target of the attacks.

Nor was evidence produced to show the factory in the Sudanese capital Khartoum, that was destroyed by Tomahawks, produced chemical weapons. The Sudanese government insisted it could prove that the factory was used specifically for pharmaceutical production and that it produced half the country's medicines. A Sudanese opposition leader said he had consulted scientists familiar with the factory, who he said had been suspicious about the size of its sterilisation and filling equipment.

The President listed four reasons for attacking the sites in Afghanistan. There was "convincing evidence" the groups present at the camps there had played a key role in the bombings of US embassies in East Africa; these had conducted a number of attacks in the past;

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

they were planning new attacks; and they were seeking to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Each allegation centred on Mr bin Laden.

There is no doubt that he is a dedicated enemy of both the US and Israel. He has repeatedly warned America that unless it withdrew from Saudi Arabia, there would be attacks on its forces. And he has been at the centre of a coalescence of previously separate groups, including Egyptian Islamic Jihad and the Islamic Group.

But the first curious paradox of the attacks is that they were not, apparently, directed at Mr bin Laden at all.

"We were not going directly after Osama bin Laden," said General Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on Thursday. The targets were the infrastructure, and, apparently, the leaders of other groups who were to be present that day, he said.

"We don't know where bin Laden is," a senior intelligence official said on Thursday, once the cameras were turned off.

Yet Mr bin Laden was, according to Mr Clinton, indirectly responsible for a vast number of terrorist attacks: the killing of German tourists in Egypt, at least six attempted bombings of US airliners over the Pacific, an assassination attempt on the Pope, another on the President of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, attacks on American, Belgian and Italian peace-keepers in Somalia, and more.

This is a trail that goes back years and apparently links Mr

bin Laden to virtually everything bad that has happened in the world in the past decade. Yet if he is so bad, why has the US waited this long to strike?

"This [Afghan] camp has been known for many years," said the senior intelligence official. "Why didn't the US strike sooner?" asked a reporter. "I can't answer that question," the official responded.

The evidence linking the embassy bombings to Mr bin Laden was left unsaid, and it seems remarkable that in a scant two weeks, there could be conclusive proof of Mr bin Laden's guilt. Louis Freeh, director of the FBI, said yesterday that the raids were, contrary to earlier statements, not directly linked to the embassy bombings.

"Many people in a number of places" could have been responsible for the attacks in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi, he said. While there was "compelling evidence," the US preferred to stress that the attacks were really intended to head off another, future outrage.

Perhaps the most curious part of Thursday's statement is the charge which America did not lay at Mr bin Laden's feet: the two bombings of US facilities in Saudi Arabia, including Khobar Towers.

In private, US officials have been saying for years that he was the man behind the attacks. But Saudi Arabia has resisted allegations that the bombings were an internal affair, preferring to stress an external threat.

"Is he connected to Khobar Towers?" a reporter asked the senior intelligence official. "I don't have anything about Khobar," the official responded.



Above: A man covers his face outside the Khartoum factory that was attacked by the US on Thursday for allegedly making chemical weapons



Right: A technician at the Shifa Pharmaceutical building before the attack



Left: Sudanese television shows charred bottles at the plant. Sudan claims it only made medicines

APTV, APTV, Reuters

Public Enemy No 1 – a title he always wanted

IN THE spring of last year Osama bin Laden was a lonely, isolated man. Though he had called for a holy war against the United States, the Americans had largely ignored him. Saddam Hussein was flavour of the year in the American hate stakes. How Mr bin Laden must have been delighted, then, when Bill Clinton this week called him "Public Enemy Number One".

Infantile though the title is – Hollywood and Washington now seem to replicate each other – the US President had at last bestowed on the Saudi dissident the accolade he has always sought. Mr Clinton had now recognised the titanic struggle that Mr bin Laden was prepared

BY ROBERT FISK
Middle East Correspondent

to wage against the world's most powerful nation.

An hour before the Americans launched their cruise missiles at Afghanistan, Mr bin Laden had sent a message to a Pakistani journalist in Peshawar, a satellite call in which an Egyptian doctor – whom I last saw sitting beside Mr bin Laden in Afghanistan – said the Saudi was not responsible for the attacks on the US embassies in Africa but invited all Muslims to join his jihad (holy war) against "the Americans and the Jews".

He denied the bombings in Africa just as he once denied to

me his responsibility for the bombing of a US base in Dhahran that killed 19 Americans. He is, it would seem, a warrior who does not go to war, all cloak and no dagger.

True? Perhaps. But Mr bin Laden's record as a guerrilla – rather than the world's latest super-terrorist – is a real one. Initially unwilling to discuss his battle against the Soviet occupation army in Afghanistan – he became one of the war's guerrilla heroes – he told me, when I first met him in Sudan in 1993, that God had given him peace of mind during combat.

"Once I was only 30 metres from the Russians and they were trying to capture me," he said. "I was under bombard-

ment but I was so peaceful in my heart I fell asleep. This experience has been written about in our earliest books. I saw a 120mm mortar shell land in front of me, but it did not blow up. Four more bombs were dropped from a Russian plane on our headquarters but they did not explode. We beat the Soviet Union. The Russians fled."

Little wonder, perhaps, that Mr bin Laden feels he can force the Americans to leave Saudi Arabia, the campaign he has been espousing for three years. Did he not help to drive the Russian army out of Afghanistan, even if at terrible cost in life? "I was never afraid of death," he told me in Sudan. "As Muslims, we believe that

when we die, we go to heaven. Before a battle, God sends us *sajda*, tranquility."

Is that how he feels today, in the aftermath of Bill Clinton's 60-missile strike against the old CIA camps in which the Americans once trained Mr bin Laden's fellow guerrillas?

He always denied any involvement with the Americans. "Personally, neither I nor my brothers saw evidence of American help. When my mujahedin (holy warriors) were victorious and the Russians were driven out, differences started [between the Afghans]."

It was disgust at this factional fighting that persuaded him to travel to Sudan where he stayed until his eviction, at

America's request, in 1996. Already, Egypt had accused him of involvement in attacks on Egyptian police, using his Arab fighters from Afghanistan.

He had taken them there – in their thousands – from the first days of the Russian-Afghan war in 1979, using his road construction equipment (the business which made him a multi-millionaire) to blast massive tunnels into the Zazi mountains of Bakhtiar province for guerrilla hospitals and arms dumps. "I fought there but my fellow Muslims did much more than I," he told me. "Many of them died. But I am still alive."

Bill Clinton might have wished Mr bin Laden were among Russia's victims. Or

would he really wish that? In America's search for "public enemies", Mr bin Laden looks the part; dark-skinned, sharp-eyed, dressed in robes, cleaning his teeth with a piece of stick during conversations, constantly threatening the US and Israel. Who would the Americans strike at if Mr bin Laden did not exist? And who would Mr bin Laden hate if the Americans packed up and went home?

"What I lived in two years there [in Afghanistan]," he once said to me, "I could not have lived in a hundred years elsewhere." That must be truer now than when he first used those words almost five years ago. Today, he could not be better known – or more reviled by his enemies.



Osama bin Laden: Denies bombing US embassies

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Sudan denounces US 'terrorism'

WITH SMOKE still rising from the rubble of the El Shifa chemical plant, Sudan's government yesterday branded President Bill Clinton a terrorist and a liar, and demanded the United Nations investigate whether the factory was involved in making chemical weapons as the United States alleges.

Appearing on state television, President Omar Hassan al-Bashir described Mr Clinton as a "morally decrepit liar" who had launched an attack on a harmless factory to distract attention from the White House sex scandal. He also announced the recall of Sudanese diplomats from the US - thus effectively severing ties with Washington, which had pulled its home-based staff out of Khartoum in 1996 amid accusations Sudan was a state which harboured terrorists.

"This is a terrorist action,"

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

the President declared as he vowed to seek support and aid from other Arab countries, and banned US planes from Sudanese air space.

"This aggression targets Arab and Muslim people. They have no right to strike Sudan with no justification or evidence." His embassy in Nairobi, Kenya, scene of the devastating truck bomb on 7 August that provoked Thursday's retaliation, was even more abusive of Mr Clinton, calling him a "sexual pervert and maniac".

Yesterday crowds gathered at the plant in the centre of the capital, smoking and smouldering despite heavy rain. Workers with masks over their faces were combing through the wreckage searching for survivors, as bystanders voiced



disbelief at the American charges. "Are they crazy," said a woman who worked there. "Do you really think this is a weapons factory?"

British experts too were doubtful. David Holle, director of the British-Sudanese Public Affairs Council, insisted there was no evidence of chemical weapons being manufactured anywhere in Sudan, citing sev-

eral government statements to that effect.

Alan White, head of operations in Sudan for the DHL courier company, who was at dinner three miles from the factory when the missiles struck, was also sceptical. "I have been there," he said. "It is a very modern facility, and a well reputed factory for pharmaceuticals."

Last night confusion surrounded the number of casualties from the strikes, said to have been carried out by at least seven cruise missiles. The main hospital in Khartoum spoke of 10 wounded, four of them in critical condition. But the city's governor, Majid al-Khalifa, said "several" people had been killed, and 300 more were unaccounted for.

Hours after the missiles struck, scores of Sudanese attacked the empty US embassy, hurling stones and abuse.



Sudanese television images of people injured in the Khartoum factory, which allegedly made chemical weapons, targeted by an American air attack on Thursday. The city's main hospital reported 10 people wounded. AP

Protesters turn fire on Westerners

BY AMIR SHAH
in Kabul

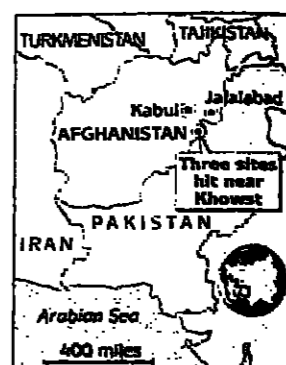
PRAYER LEADERS at mosques in the Afghan capital of Kabul and the southern city of Kandahar, the Taliban's stronghold, yesterday exhorted the faithful to protest against the missile strikes on eastern Afghanistan.

The anti-American fever spilled over into attacks on Westerners in Kabul. Shots were fired at a vehicle transporting United Nations workers, wounding an Italian and a Frenchman in an attack a diplomat linked to the US raids in Afghanistan and Sudan.

"It is clear that this was not an error but a reaction to yesterday's American attack," said Lellio Crivellaro, chargé d'affaires at Italy's embassy in Islamabad.

The Italian Defence Ministry said Carmine Calo, an army lieutenant-colonel, was hit in the chest by a bullet that had bounced off the vehicle.

Hundreds of Afghan people heeded the call to protest, taking to the streets to shout "God is great! Down with US!" and to deny the attack on



Afghanistan as an attack on the entire Islamic world.

"We will not hand over Osama bin Laden... Osama is our guest and we cannot hand over our Muslim brother to the enemy of Islam," demonstrators in Kandahar vowed.

The Taliban spokesman, Wakil Ahmed Akhuzada, said 21 people were killed and another 30 were injured when US cruise missiles exploded at the Zhawar Kili Al-Badr base near Khawst, about 90 miles south-east of Kabul.

A Pakistani official said one of the missiles aimed at Afghanistan landed in Pakistan, killing at least five people.

Aid workers trapped in Taliban town

ABOUT 100 foreign aid workers, including at least a dozen Britons, were still waiting yesterday to be evacuated from Afghanistan as fears grew of a possible backlash from locals over the United States strikes.

In the southern city of Kandahar, headquarters of the ruling Taliban militia, the streets were quiet despite rumours of an American invasion. More than 20 aid workers remained trapped in the town, sheltering in the Red Cross and United Nations compounds. Both compounds are equipped with food and water but neither has the security to withstand an attack from either the locals or from the Taliban.

Mullah Omar, the leader of the Taliban, has a house only

300 metres from the UN compound, which was built for him by Osama bin Laden. The two are close friends and Mr bin Laden's daughter is married to Mr Omar.

Aid workers were anxiously awaiting a UN flight to safety in Pakistan when a flight yesterday was cancelled.

A rally held yesterday in Kandahar against foreign intervention in Afghanistan went off peacefully.

Foreigners in Kandahar hope that the Taliban will not be hostile and will, as the UN has requested, guarantee their security. The atmosphere, however, remains extremely tense.



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Blair said to
be close to
Catholicism

ROBERT FISKE

Killer mink causing seabird disaster

BY MICHAEL MCCARTHY
Environment Correspondent

SEABIRDS ALONG 600 miles of the Scottish coastline are being wiped out by mink, in what one scientist terms "an ornithological disaster".

The small predators, introduced into Britain by fur farms, are now decimating the populations of gulls, terns, cormorants and other birds that inhabit the sea lochs of the Western Highlands.

In 10 years populations between Skye in the North and the Mull of Kintyre in the South have fallen by up to 50 per cent. In some lochs, birds are still clinging on and attempting to breed although all their chicks are being killed - but in many others, such as Loch Sunart and Loch Sween, they have disappeared.

These lochs have become "ghost towns", according to Clive Craik, a biologist from the marine laboratory at Dunstaffnage near Oban, who is studying the problem.

"Mink are now a greater threat to British seabirds than oil spills," Dr Craik said.

Natives of North America, mink began to build up a wild population in Britain in the post-war years after escapes from fur farms, and from the Sixties onwards they became strongly established.

The minks flourished because they filled an empty niche in the British ecosystem for an aquatic carnivore - a flesh-eating predator which is as much at home in the water as it is on land.

Mink are strong swimmers and this has allowed them to cause particular damage to certain wildlife species. They have wiped out water voles from many English rivers, and now the Highland seabirds.

The birds in the fjord-like sea lochs of the west coast of Scotland are particularly vulnerable because they breed on the ground in large colonies on small offshore islands where, before the mink's arrival, they were safe from predators such as foxes and stoats. Mink, how-



Able to swim as well as they kill, mink can be deadly to seabirds such as these common gulls (above) killed in a loch



SPREAD OF MINK IN THE WEST HIGHLAND SEA LOCHS



These maps show how mink, entirely unknown in the Western Highlands until after the war, have spread in three decades to cover the majority of the coastline. Indicated is their presence in ten-kilometre grid squares: three in 1965, more than seventy by the mid 1990s.

ever, can reach the islands with ease, where they frequently kill all the birds they find.

"They've come in the last 10 years and they're wreaking terrible havoc, taking all the eggs and chicks," Dr Craik said. "They do far more damage than their diet requires. They take the eggs and chicks and hide them."

Several species have suffered catastrophic declines, which Dr Craik - who visits the lochs seven days a week during the summer months with a small boat on his car - has graphically catalogued.

Common terns in his study area, which stretches from Mallaig opposite Skye to Campbeltown in Kintyre, have gone down from 1,839 pairs in 1987 - which was more than 10 per cent of the British population - to 1,029 pairs last year, a decline of 44 per cent.

Common gulls, which despite their name are far from common, have gone from 1,248 pairs in 1989 to 714 pairs last year, a 43 per cent decline, and black-headed gulls have gone down from 630 pairs in 1989 to 290 pairs last year, a decline of 54 per cent.

Other birds have also suffered severely although Dr Craik has not been able to record their declines in the

same detail. They include cormorants, shags and herring gulls, and one of the coast's most attractive birds - the black guillemot - which also nests on the ground on the islands, and is now vanishing from the coast.

"I view it as an ornithological

disaster," Dr Craik said. "If an oil spill is a disaster for seabirds, this is worse. It's far worse than the Braer [in Shetland in 1993] or the Exxon Valdez [in Alaska in 1989]."

"In those cases the birds' populations went down by 15 to 20 per cent, but then they came

back up, and here they are going completely.

"I find it very sad, these beautiful birds disappearing from these beautiful sea lochs. In some there's nothing now. It's like going into a ghost town. People haven't really woken up to what is happening, but I

lie awake thinking about it."

Lochs where birds have stopped breeding completely include Sunart, Teacuis, Crinan, Sween, Caolisport, Tayvallich Harbour, The Sound of Luing and parts of Loch Linnhe.

Lochs where birds are still trying to breed without any

success - the stage before abandonment - include Lochs Nan Ceall, Nan Uamh and Moidart.

However, Dr Craik has tried to defend the seabirds, and he has organised mink trapping forays with success in other lochs, including Ailort, Leven,

Etie, Fochan, Craignish and West Loch Tarbert, where the seabirds are still breeding.

About 1,500 of the 6,000 mink released from a fur farm at Ringwood in Hampshire by animal welfare activists a fortnight ago are still at large, police said yesterday.

Blair said to be close to Catholicism

TONY BLAIR confided while on holiday in Italy that he was "very close" to Catholicism, according to the head of the diocese in which he was staying.

At the end of a specially arranged meeting with the Archbishop of Siena, in the sacristy of San Gimignano's Duomo, the Prime Minister - an Anglo-Catholic - expressed how close he felt to the Catholic faith, it is claimed.

Details of his private conversation with Mgr Gaetano Bonicelli, combined with reports that he was "so familiar" with the liturgy and responses during Mass in Italy that he "hardly needed" his Missal, have prompted speculation about his keenness to convert.

It is unclear whether he received communion at the Mass but, if he did, it would not have been the first time. On previous occasions, he has taken communion in Catholic churches. Mr Blair only desisted after it came to people's notice. Earlier this year he was seen going to Sunday Mass at Westminster Cathedral without the other members of his immediate family, all of whom are Catholic.

In an interview with *The Catholic Herald* newspaper this week, Archbishop Bonicelli said that Mr Blair had told him "that he felt very close to the Catholic Church, and to the world of Catholicism", as they were leaving San Gimignano's main church.

However, Downing Street was extremely defensive and moved to quash the story yesterday. William Oddie, the former Anglican clergyman who was recently appointed editor of *The Catholic Herald*, said: "I'm not quite sure why Mr Blair is so cagey about it. What's so ter-

BY CLARE GARNER

rrible about going to talk to an archbishop? It's almost as if it's some secret vice."

Mr Oddie doubted that the Prime Minister would convert because, like many Anglo-Catholics, he probably already regards himself as a Catholic. "Having been an Anglo-Catholic myself," he said, "I know very well that Anglo-Catholics feel very close to Catholicism. Quite often this is a way of having a broadly Catholic view without having to go the whole way in various beliefs."

Archbishop Bonicelli said that he found it "normal" that Mr Blair showed such an interest in Catholicism. "His wife is Catholic and so are his children. I do not find the Anglican church and the Catholic church to be very different anyway, especially in creed." He added that the Prime Minister's comments did not amount to "an affirmation of a desire to convert".

Mr Blair and his wife, Cherie, arranged the meeting with the Archbishop in San Gimignano after the couple decided to change their plans and not go to Siena. The Archbishop is understood to have offered to go to the Renaissance villa of Prince Girolamo Strozzi, where the Blairs were staying. However, since the Archbishop was planning to be near San Gimignano for a religious procession, they agreed to meet in the town.

A Downing Street spokesman denied that the conversation between the two men on 18 August ever turned to conversion. He also refused to confirm or deny whether Mr Blair received communion at Catholic services in Italy.



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ROBERT FISK

Before every air strike, the president assures his future victims how much he admires them

WEEKEND REVIEW, PAGE 3

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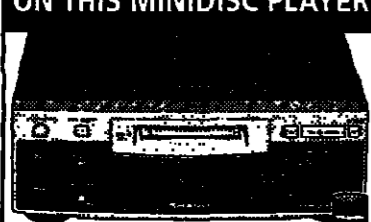
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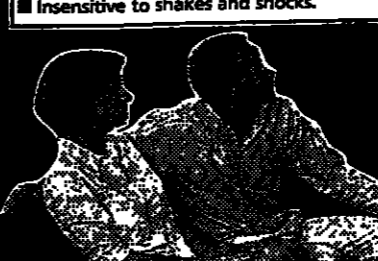
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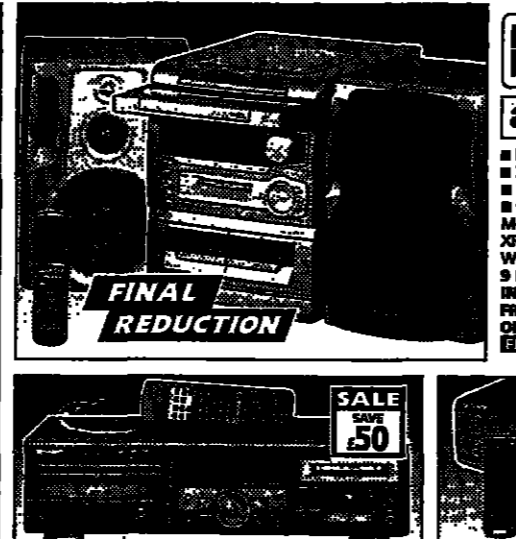
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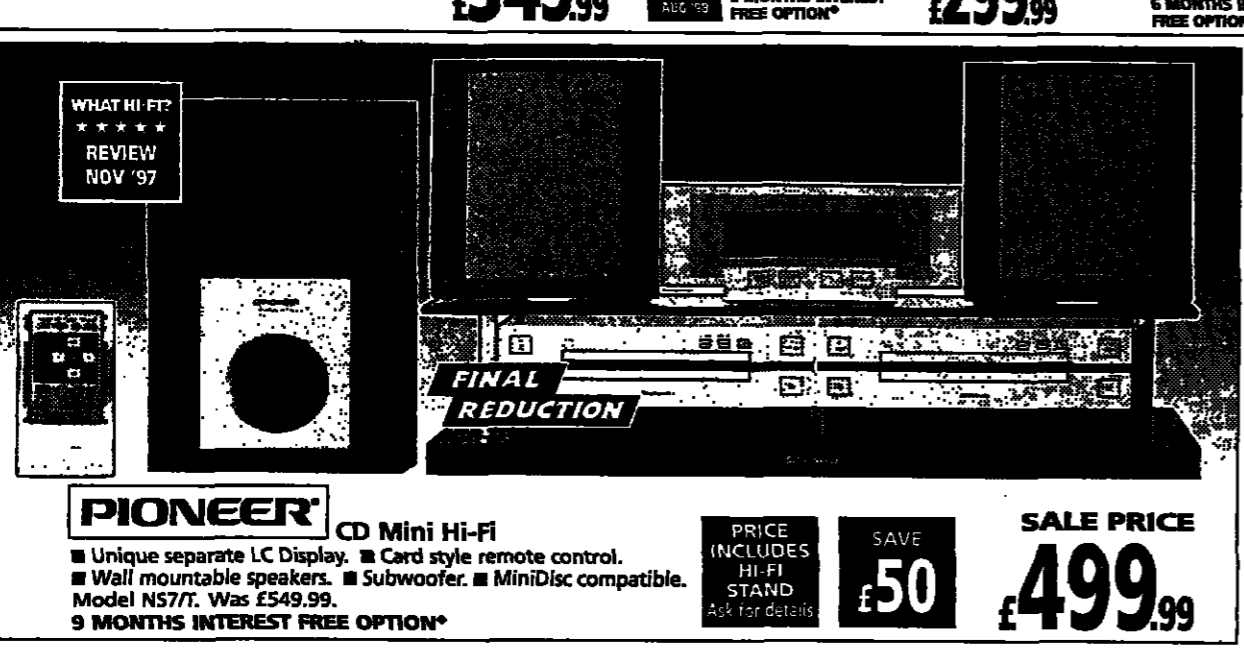
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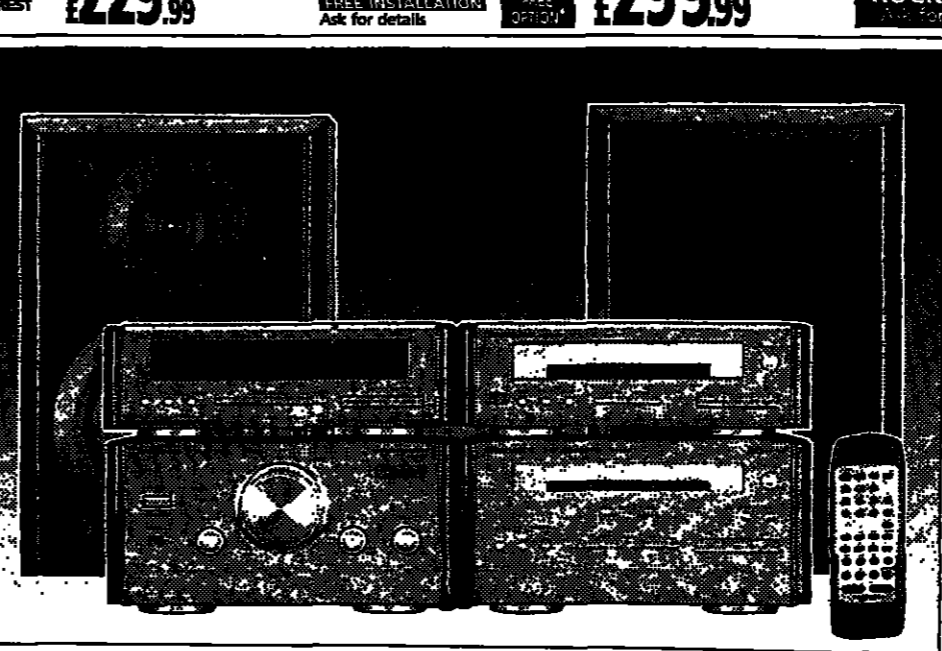
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■ Multiplay - plays up to 3 CDs.
■ Multiplay - plays up to 3 CDs.
Model MDT315.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
CURRYS PRICE
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SHARP Portable Recordable
MiniDisc Player
■ Digital synchronous
recording.
■ 10 second anti-shock
memory.
Model MDX501.
Was £299.99. Was £279.99.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
SALE PRICE
£249.99



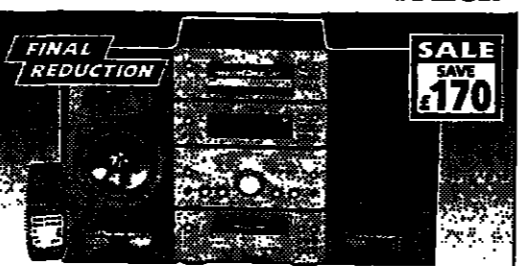
PIONEER CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ Unique separate LC Display. ■ Card style remote control.
■ Wall mountable speakers. ■ Subwoofer. ■ MiniDisc compatible.
Model NS77. Was £549.99.
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
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Technics Compact CD
Micro Hi-Fi
■ 30 watts (RMS) per channel.
■ Remote control.
■ 4-piece system.
Model SCD51.
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
CURRYS PRICE
£399.99



SONY CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ Multiplay - plays up to 3 CDs.
■ Full remote control.
■ 100 watts (RMS) per channel.
■ MiniDisc compatible.
Model MHC-W550.
Was £499.99. ■ 9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
SALE PRICE
£399.99
SAVE
£100



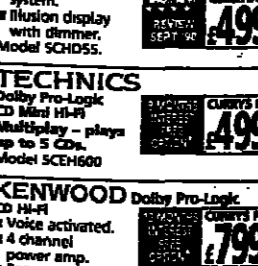
WHARFEDALE CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ Multiplay - plays up to 7 CDs.
■ Tray load cassette deck.
■ 50 watts (RMS) per channel. ■ RDS digital tuner.
Model SY5990. Was £799.99. Was £649.99.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
FREE HI-FI STAND Ask for details
SALE PRICE
£629.99
SAVE
£170



Panasonic CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ Multiplay - plays up to 5 CDs.
■ 100 watts (RMS) per channel.
■ Superwoofer.
Model SCAR5.
6 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
CURRYS PRICE
£299.99



DENON CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ MiniDisc compatible.
■ RDS digital tuner.
■ 4-piece system.
Model DDC55.
12 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
CURRYS PRICE
£699.99



KENWOOD CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ 2x20 watts
per channel.
Model HAT01.
9 MONTHS INTEREST FREE OPTION*
CURRYS PRICE
£449.99



TECHNICS CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ 4-piece component
system.
■ Motion display
with stereo
Model SCD55.
CURRYS PRICE
£499.99



KENWOOD Dolby Pro-Logic
CD Mini Hi-Fi
■ 4 channel
power amp.
■ Remote control.
Model SEA550.
CURRYS PRICE
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EXAMPLE OF INTEREST FREE OPTION ON SELECTED PRODUCTS

HOW IT WORKS Account is interest free if repaid by full instalment of £12.50. Balance of £237.44 to be repaid by 12 monthly payments of £19.79. Total amount payable £237.44.

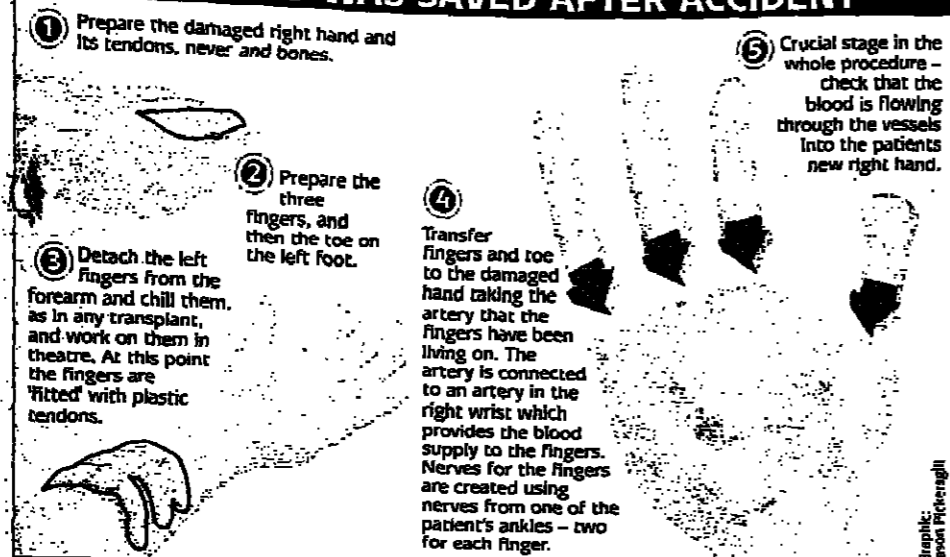
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Handwritten note: *Handwritten note: 15.50*

Surgeons grafted fingers on to arm

HOW HAND WAS SAVED AFTER ACCIDENT



SURGEONS HAVE rebuilt a woman's hand after it was severed in a factory accident using a technique that involved storing her fingers elsewhere on her body.

In a scene stranger than science fiction, the 19-year-old woman lived for eight months after the accident last December with the three undamaged fingers of her right hand attached to her left forearm, just below the elbow.

The fingers, which were supplied with blood by an artery from the arm, had to be stored while surgeons rebuilt the right hand, the centre of which was destroyed in the accident, in a series of operations.

Last Wednesday, the team at St James's University Hospital, Leeds, transplanted the fin-

BY JEREMY LAURANCE
Health Editor

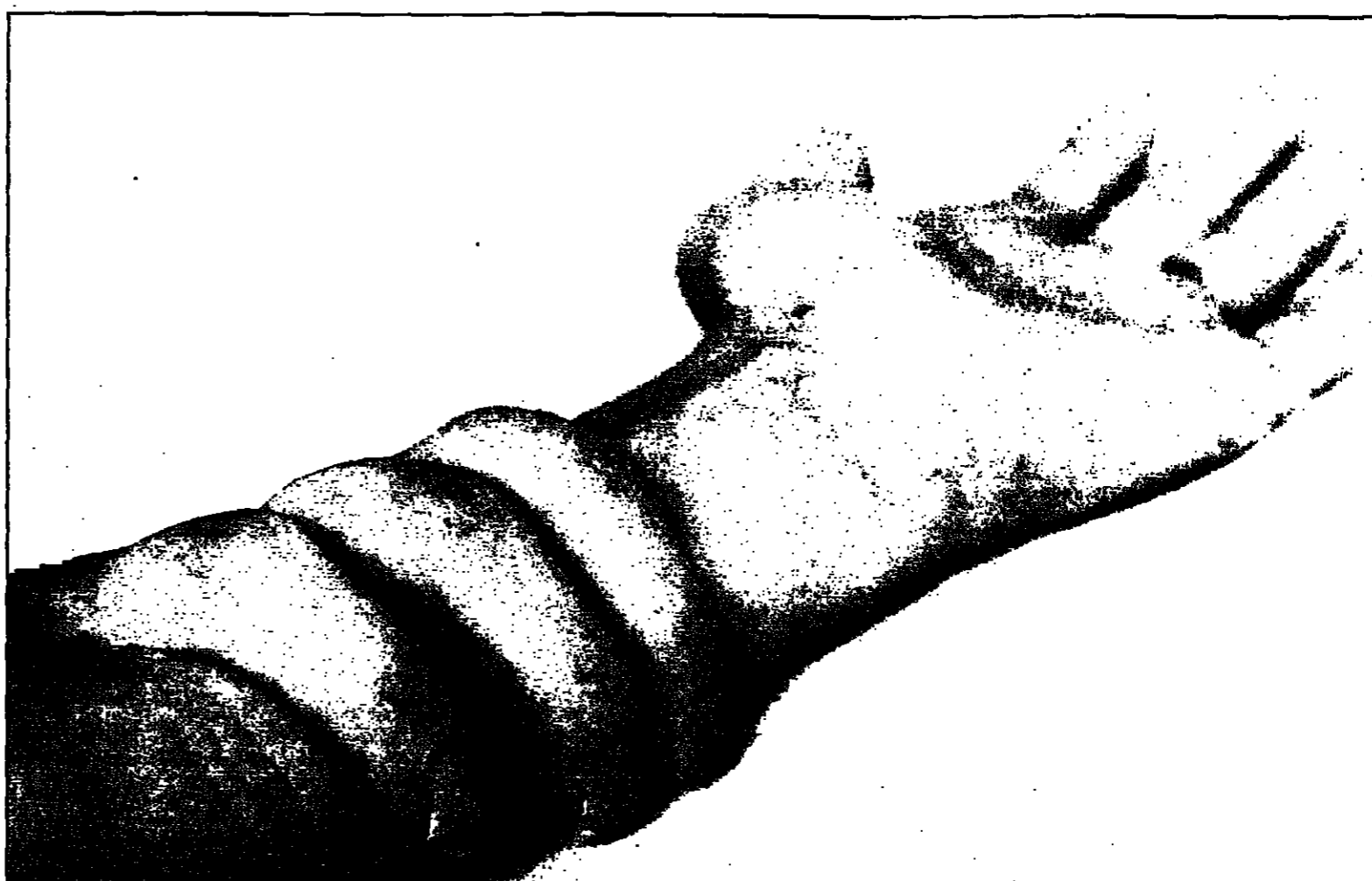
gers back to the prepared right hand, with a toe from the woman's foot that will serve as a thumb. The rebuilt hand is expected to give the woman some movement and grip, which will allow her to perform everyday tasks.

Simon Kay, consultant plastic surgeon and an expert in hand surgery who has performed more than 50 toe-to-hand transfers in children, said: "We are delighted with the patient's condition, things are looking good and we don't anticipate any problems. Although the concept is very simple, it is a technical challenge to put all of the pieces together."

The woman, who has not been identified, underwent several procedures to improve the appearance of the hand before Wednesday's surgery. Skin was grafted from her hip and she also had daily physiotherapy to keep the joints in her damaged hand and the fingers, which were usually hidden under a bandage, supple.

She said: "I was shocked when I came round fully from the surgery last year and a bit bewildered. I realised it would change my life. It was a big step to take the dressing off my damaged hand and go into the pub. The people who have seen the fingers have been amazed but shocked as well."

She added: "There was a time when I thought why don't I just leave the hand, because



The woman's three undamaged fingers attached to her left arm for storage while her right hand was being rebuilt

Ross Parry

I've had a lot of scars to get used to. But even if I can just pick up a piece of paper it'll be wonderful."

The preservation of amputated parts of a body by storing them elsewhere has been at-

tempted before but only three or four successful cases are known worldwide. One included saving a hand by attaching it to the patient's arm.

This week's operation to replace the severed fingers last-

ed 12 hours. The fingers were first detached from the left forearm with the artery that had kept them supplied with blood and chilled, as in any transplant. Plastic tendons were fitted to each finger and

the artery was connected to an artery in the right wrist. Nerves for each finger were created from those taken from the woman's ankle.

Mr Kay is one of the most skilled microsurgons in the

country and has an international reputation in reconstructing damaged limbs. Three years ago, he reattached the hand of a man that had been severed by an assailant wielding a samurai sword.

'Loophole' gives stalker his freedom



Morris: Threatened his victim with claw hammer

A PSYCHOPATH who stalked a dental receptionist for eight months was allowed to walk free from court yesterday after doctors decided his mental disorder was "untreatable".

Clarence Morris, 39, had threatened his victim over 200 times, thrown women's underwear at her and threatened her with a claw hammer. He had previous convictions for rape, unlawful sexual intercourse and indecent assault.

Judge Peter Fingert said it.

BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

was "regrettable" that the limitations of the Mental Health Act prevented him from sending Morris to a secure hospital where he could stay for an indefinite period.

His decision followed evidence from a psychiatrist who said that although Morris had a psychopathic disorder he was not suitable for treatment. The judge sentenced Morris

to 46 months in jail, but because he had spent 27 months in custody he was released yesterday to a secret address.

The outcome came as a disappointment to Victim Support which said: "This is not going to encourage people to come forward. Stalking is very distressing for victims and having to go to court and face the perpetrator is distressing as well."

Morris's victim, Perry Southall, 24, was in court yesterday to hear the verdict. In

her evidence, she said her terror was so intense that she developed pains in her joints and abdomen, and would suddenly burst into tears.

She said: "Before Clarence Morris came on the scene, I was a confident, outgoing person. He has reduced me to a point where I find it hard to cope with everyday life." Ms Southall made no comment on the outcome as she left court.

But Anne Strahan of the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, which

advises on how to deal with stalkers, said there was a loophole in the law: "While someone may not be normal by the standards of a normal person in the street, unless they have a treatable illness they cannot be sent to an institution."

Morris was originally sentenced to five years in 1997 but during a retrial, psychiatrist Dr Neil Boast told the court that although Morris posed a "high risk of future violence" he was not suitable for secure hospital

treatment, under the terms of the Mental Health Act, and could be released as long as he continued to take medication.

Judge Fingert warned Morris that if he broke the conditions of his release by trying to see Ms Southall or failing to take his medication, he would be sent back to prison.

The court heard that Morris had a total of 39 previous convictions, most of them for violence and dishonesty and had spent 15 years in jail.



Southall: Finds it hard to cope with everyday life

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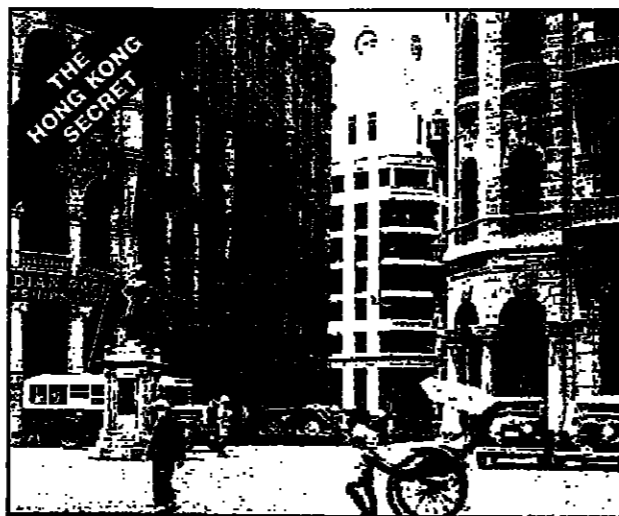
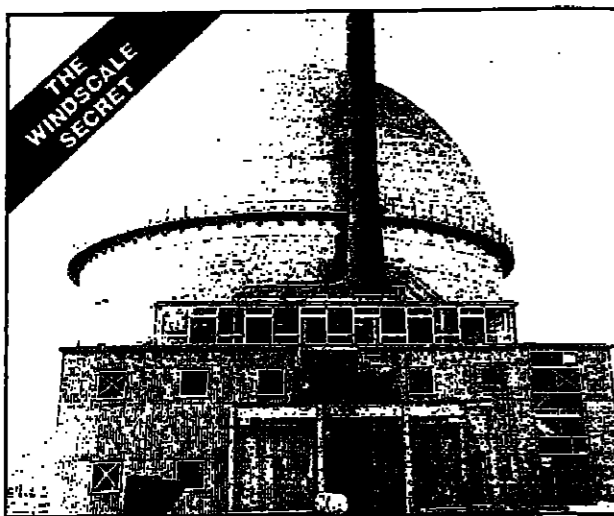
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Bizarre secrets kept under wraps

DETAILS OF 50-year-old medical experiments on monkeys and stray dogs, and a report on the use of outer space written in 1959 are among files suppressed by the Government.

Despite the Labour Government's much-vaunted commitment to open government, thousands of documents are being withheld past the 30-year period.

The files on animals are

BY PAUL LASHMAR AND
ANDREW MULLINS

Medical Research Council documents held at the Public Record Office in Kew, west London, but not open to the public. Other MRC reports are held back.

Two files from 1950 titled Monkey Experimentation, from the minutes of the Research Committee on the Medical and

Biological Application of Nuclear Physics, are closed for 50 years. One can speculate that these are held back to spare the feeling of animal lovers over the grim fate of our fellow primates.

The Medical Research Council says that files involving animals or patients' records are held for 50 years.

The suppression of the Ministry of Defence's 1959 report, "The use of outer space", will

be grist to the mill of Ufologists and X-Files addicts alike. The non-release of a 1972 MoD file on Kenneth Littlejohn will also arouse the interest of conspiracy theorists. Littlejohn was a renegade MI5 agent working against the IRA who died in mysterious circumstances.

There have been suspicions that the secret services may have had a role in his death. These items may verge on

the bizarre but many Cabinet minutes and memorandums are still suppressed. Taking 1953 as a random year, 22 Cabinet minutes and 19 Cabinet memorandums for that year are still excised from the record. They will not be released until 2004 or 2054.

Numerous files on Hong Kong from the MoD and the Foreign Office are "retained by department" with no release

date. Why, for instance, is a Cabinet document on "Anglo-French Union", dated October 1956, withheld?

In July 1993, William Waldegrave, the minister then responsible for Cabinet records, launched an initiative to release documents held past the 30-year period. Tens of thousands of documents were given "accelerated release". But concern is rising at the number that

continue to be withheld. Some are withheld to protect privacy. These include hundreds of files on the Royal Family. Files that impinge on individual privacy of those still alive are often closed for 75 years.

But, the Government cannot say how many documents it continues to hold back. A spokeswoman from the Cabinet Office said there is "no central tally" of documents that continue to be suppressed.

In recent weeks the Government's commitment to open government has been questioned after the failure to produce a Freedom of Information Bill.

Historians, such as Richard Aldrich, of the University of Nottingham, say the Government concentrates on releasing documents that produce publicity, such as details of the plot to kill Hitler. "What we have is a few high-profile releases like the recent SOE (Special Operations Executive) documents, while documents that are more important to our understanding of history may take another 10 years to be released."

Brian Brivati, of Kingston University, said that by "cherry-picking" files that attract publicity, "we end up with bits and pieces and it will be a long time before we can write proper history".

According to Mr Aldrich, the

biggest problem is the lack of resources given to government departments to release documents. "Britain doesn't value its history. In the United States, government hire the best historians to oversee their declassification programmes. Here they often use low-paid civil servants who have little historical knowledge."

He cited the recent case of a government "weeder" who had obviously spent hours excising the initials "PUSD" from documents. PUSD stands for the Foreign Office's Permanent Under-Secretary's Department and one of its tasks is to keep an eye on MI6.

"The authorities seem quite unaware that the intelligence and security aspects of PUSD were discussed as early as 1956 in Lord Strang's memoirs," Mr Aldrich said.

He pointed to cutbacks in the number of people "weeding" files for release. "Each year the budgets are cut," he said. "The staff are demoralised and worked to the bone. The MoD record office has been moved three or four times in the last three years."

Mr Brivati said: "It is ludicrous that they do not release everything pre-1950, exempting only those files which intrude on individual privacy. This would free up weeders to work on later periods."

STILL CLASSIFIED

Files withheld at the Public Record Office beyond 30 years

- Medical Research Committee. Monkey experiments - Research Committee on the Medical and Biological Applications of Nuclear Physics. Files FD1 495 & 496.
- Medical Research Committee. Stray cats and dogs: guidelines and cases 1941-54. FD1 331.
- Medical Research Committee. Use of ACTH and cortisone. 1951-53. FD1 643.
- Atomic Energy Commission: 1959 accident at Aldermaston 26-2-59 EG1/173.
- Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food: Windscale accident 1957: effects of radioactivity on animals. MAFF 298/54.
- War Office: Irish Situation 1914-22. Raid and Search Reports. WO35/868.
- Air Ministry: Hong Kong: Photographic Reconnaissance 1950-56: Air 8/2399.
- Air Ministry: Special Operations Executive 1941-51. Air 40/2573.
- Chiefs of Staff: Chemical Warfare Policy - COS (53) 2, Minute 1.
- Prime Minister's Office: De Gaulle 1943. PREM 3 121/4.
- Prime Minister's Office: Soviet Union 1946. PREM 8 342.
- Colonial Office: Palestine - Jewish Leaders who evaded arrest. 1947 CO 537/1722.
- Cabinet: Anglo-French Union. October 1956. CAB 130/120.
- Ministry of Health: Venereal Disease. Disclosure of information. Divorce and other legal proceedings. 1927-35. MH55/1324.
- Ministry of Health: Hospital workers from Barbados. 1947-52. MH55/1474.

IN BRIEF

Green activists jailed for railway line damage in quarry protest

TWO GREEN activists were yesterday jailed for a total of 18 months for plotting to cut through a railway line as part of a protest against quarrying.

Richard Dixon, 50, and Rosemary Browning, 43, were sentenced to a year and six months respectively at Bristol Crown Court for plotting to cut the line to Whatley Quarry in Frome, Somerset, in September 1996.

The pair, who denied conspiracy to cause criminal damage with a reckless disregard for the lives of anyone who travelled on the line, are planning to appeal against both conviction and sentence.

Family of five die in car fire

FIVE PEOPLE, including two children and a baby, died when a car crashed into a ditch, turned over and caught fire on the A303 near Yeovil, Somerset, yesterday. Initial reports indicated that only one vehicle was involved in the accident. A spokeswoman for Somerset Fire Brigade said it appeared all the dead were from one family. A dog also died in the blaze.

World heritage site nominations

THE INDUSTRIAL landscape of Wales, Cornish tin mines and the Forth Rail Bridge in Scotland are being proposed as modern-day wonders of the world. Chris Smith, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, yesterday announced 32 recommendations to join the Great Wall of China and Taj Mahal on the United Nations' list of world heritage sites. Consultation is invited on the proposals.

'Heightist' policy unlawful

A MAN refused a job at a poultry factory because he was "too tall" was victim of sex discrimination, an industrial tribunal ruled yesterday. Barry Seale, who is 6ft 2in, was rejected for work by Sun Valley Foods in Hereford.

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The new iMac computer is being hailed as a design classic and is already a best-seller

Andrew Burnman

See-through computer set for a sell-out

STYLE COMMENTATORS are comparing it to design classics like the Volkswagen Beetle, and the "helmet" hairdryers of the 1950s. It is being described as the sort of computer that the futuristic cartoon characters The Jetsons would have. And Apple's new iMac, which goes on sale in Britain in two weeks, is already the fastest-selling personal computer of recent times.

When it went on sale in the US seven days ago, more than 150,000 machines, many ordered in advance, were sold in the first weekend. Some stores opened at midnight to serve eager buyers. But besides

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

marking a minor rebirth for Apple, the turquoise-and-white translucent casing of the iMac could also see the end of the beige plastic breeze-blocks that have plagued desks since 1982, when IBM launched the first PC. At long last, design has caught up with the computer market.

"I could imagine Ikea selling stacks of these," said Richard Wilson, research director of the software company Digital Village. "Think of all these people who have bought frosted blue glasses and other translucent things, and want something to go with them. This is the first computer that can sit comfortably in the public space in your home, rather than needing to be hidden under a desk."

Ikea will not be selling them yet, though it may start asking soon. The iMac arrives in the UK on 5 September with a price tag of £999 including VAT. Besides computer stores, it will also be on sale via John Lewis, the department store chain. Apple UK says it has been told already of "thousands" of advance orders.

Some think the reason is obvious. "It looks like it's from another planet, a planet with better designers," said Steve Jobs, chief executive of Apple Computer.

But reviews in the US of the machine's innards have also been uniformly favourable, praising its speed - it is significantly faster than similar-priced PCs running the same tasks - and ease of use. One reviewer noted that it took him only 13 minutes to unpack it and start surfing the Internet.

It can even run programs written for Microsoft's Windows operating system, using a program called "VirtualPC" that simulates a Pentium PC. A number of American stores said that they had received orders for iMacs from existing PC owners "coming over" to the Macintosh operating system - breaking a trend that has continued for more than a decade.

Part of the explanation is clearly the eye-catching design. "People are using words like 'gorgeous' to describe it," said Brian Smith, design director of PDD, a London product design consultancy. "That's

quite a domestic word, not something that you would normally use to describe a computer."

Nobody knows why personal computers have always, until now, been beige. They just have, rather like Henry Ford's early cars, "available in any colour, as long as it's black".

But now that it has caught one element of the design Zeitgeist by introducing a translucent casing, it is not clear whether Apple will have to offer different colours - perhaps peach next year - to keep pace with fashion. Can turquoise really be the designer colour of choice two years in a row?

HOW THEY LINE UP

TOP-SELLING personal computers:

iMac

Cost: £999 (inc VAT)

The cost includes: "coloured" monitor, system, fax/Internet modem, keyboard, mouse. Software: database, word processing, spreadsheets, Internet surfing. Memory: 32 ram.

Packard Bell 9266

Cost: £899 (inc VAT)

The cost includes: monitor, system, printer, scanner, fax/Internet modem, keyboard, mouse. Software: database, word processing, spreadsheets, Internet surfing. Memory: 32 ram.

Compaq 2254

Cost: £899 (inc VAT)

The cost includes: monitor, system, printer, work station, fax/Internet modem, keyboard, mouse. Software: database, word processing, spreadsheets, Internet surfing. Memory: 32 ram.

IBM E74

Cost: £1,149 (inc VAT)

The cost includes: monitor, system, printer, scanner, fax/Internet modem, keyboard, mouse. Software: database, word processing, spreadsheets, Internet surfing. Memory: 48 ram.

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Digital TV allows 'spying' on viewers

RUPERT MURDOCH has acquired the ability to enter your living room and watch you watching television.

The launch of BSkyB digital satellite television will give the media mogul's company unprecedented power to access subscribers' televisions and record their viewing habits.

The technology is in place for Sky to find out whether vicars are watching naughty sex movies, if old ladies are obsessed by crime and violence or whether the man next door is more interested in soap operas or gardening programmes.

It is all possible because digital satellite will be interactive. The little black box that will go on top of your television set will have a two-way communications channel. During the day it could store information on viewers' programme preferences and at night Sky could ask it for that data, say digital television engineers.

The information is commercial gold-dust. Car manufacturers would, doubtless, pay to have lists of people interested in high-performance cars. Plant firms would love to know which households have a special interest in gardening. Under data protection laws, viewers would have to be told their names were being passed on - but not necessarily that the information had been gathered in the first place.

BSkyB is anxious to put subscribers' fears at rest - and stresses that just because the

BY JANE ROBINS
Media Correspondent

technology is there, it does not mean that the company will use it. "It is not the intention to record viewing habits," spokesman Chris Haines said yesterday.

The BSkyB set-top boxes, which will go on sale on 1 October, says the company, will not include the software to monitor viewers' programme choices. In practice, though, BSkyB can at any time beam new software into set-top boxes directly from its satellite.

Viewers who fear they are being "watched" by their television should note that there is a way of switching off Mr Murdoch. With each interactive set-top box, Sky wants to install a phone-line at the side of the television. This connection allows the two-way conversation between the box and Sky's headquarters. Unplug it and viewers will still receive all Sky's digital channels, they just won't be interactive.

The Independent Television Commission says it has set up meetings with other watchdogs, including telecoms regulator Ofcom and the Office of Fair Trading, to discuss competition issues. Privacy is also a big concern.

The rival digital cable firm Cable and Wireless is also in the interactive business and will be building individual customer profiles based on viewers' activities on onscreen websites.



Sunflowers being tested at the nuclear power station in Bradwell during experiments to determine if they can absorb radioactive contamination

Flower power to monitor nuclear power

SCIENTISTS wearing protective suits yesterday harvested a field of sunflowers that were planted to see whether they could absorb radioactive contamination around a nuclear power station.

The experiment, at Bradwell nuclear power station in Essex, was carried out by British Nuclear Fuels (BNFL) to see whether the compounds could be mopped up from the land after an earlier leak of water from the station's underground cooling system.

Some plants, including spinach and sugar beet, are known to absorb radioactive minerals from the ground and BNFL wants to see if the phenomenon can be exploited to clean up its nuclear sites.

Robin Sellers, a scientist at BNFL's Berkeley research centre, said: "The technology

By STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

is novel and low-cost. It also incorporates simple technology and is extremely environmentally friendly. "It is early days but the concept has tremendous potential."

The scientists will now sample the plants to see whether they successfully sucked up radioactive contaminants in the soil. BNFL said it has used nets and fencing to keep rabbits, birds and insects away from the experiment. The plants will be burned and the ash treated as radioactive waste.

BNFL officials planted the sunflowers last May in an area where a trench had been dug after rain had caused some residual contamination from parts of a disused effluent line to seep up to the surface.

Textbook lessons take joy out of sex

SEX EDUCATION textbooks for teenagers are sexist and boring, according to research by an academic who is also an Anglican vicar.

The writers are more interested in men's sexual organs than women's, give the impression that women are to blame for unwanted babies and neglect to mention that women have orgasms.

They also suggest that sex is a dull business conducted only in the missionary position.

The research, in a paper to be delivered next week at the British Educational Research Association annual conference, examined 15 standard sex education text books for 14 to 16-year-olds.

The Rev Dr Michael Reiss, a reader in education and bioethics at Homerton College, Cambridge, found that 10 of the 15 books made no reference to the clitoris.

Even when the clitoris is mentioned, says Dr Reiss, it is sometimes belittled, for example: "The clitoris is the female's equivalent of the penis."

And in the chapters on sexual intercourse, female orgasm is conspicuous mainly by its absence. While ejaculation is mentioned in 12 of the 15 books, female orgasm features in just five.

Sections on contraception are little better because they give the impression that it is mainly the responsibility of women. Under the heading "unwanted babies" one suggests: "Many of the unwanted pregnancies happen to girls and young women because either they have been given wrong advice or have ignored sound advice."

Descriptions of intercourse

By JUDITH JUDD
Education Editor

show women as "passive (supine) receptacles into which sperm are deposited". Seven of the 15 show diagrams of sexual intercourse with the man on top of the female in the missionary position.

The authors retreat into precise anatomical descriptions. The researchers say: "Some of the accounts managed to make the whole undertaking sound boring, or at any rate devoid of all passion or excitement."

According to Dr Reiss, the books' sins are mostly those of omission. He criticises the authors for avoiding tricky issues such as homosexuality and masturbation. Twelve of the 15 books do not refer to homosexuality. Dr Reiss attacks those that do for giving the impression that "homosexuality is a sort of second-best option which the reader may well grow out of."

For instance: "It is usual to feel attracted to people of the opposite sex. But during their teenage years people quite often have romantic feelings for someone of their own sex... it is a stage that will usually pass."

Masturbation is discussed in only two of the books. Dr Reiss says: "While it may be difficult to write about masturbation, it is probably easier than talking about it, which suggests that careful writing in this area could do a significant amount of good."

He argues that while nobody is expecting teenage sex books "to provide a second-wave feminist critique of sexual relationships", they should help young people through their adolescent years.

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Wounds that still hurt 11 years on

THE BRONZE statue of a soldier at the cenotaph in Enniskillen has 11 doves around it in memory of those killed in the Remembrance Day bombing. Behind it is an Orange Order hall and a patch of lush grass that used to be a Catholic church building where the bomb was hidden.

In their place there will soon stand a campus for the University of Ulster, to be shared by Protestant and Catholic students – a symbol of how the town has been healing its wounds since that Sunday in November 1987 when 11 people died and 60 were injured in a bomb that exploded without warning.

Within hours of Saturday's blast 25 miles away at Omagh, some of those who were injured at Enniskillen and others from the town arrived to help.

"We could not be anywhere else but here in Omagh," said one man as the bodies were still being taken to the mortuaries, the injured still being treated. "We shall forever share the same past."

Fermanagh District Council sent a message to Omagh saying how its people "have a fundamental understanding of the deep hurt, pain and suffering felt by you". And it is those people who have struggled to rebuild a shattered Enniskillen who will be vitally important for the future of Omagh.

Jim Dixon has had 38 operations because of the injuries he received in the Remembrance Day attack. "I heard the news and knew that I had to be in Omagh. So I went down there that night and spent two and a half hours, and then also went on Sunday afternoon."

"Obviously I have a certain

BY KIM SENGUPTA

understanding of what the people in the hospital were going through. They were in shock, hurt and bewildered. I just told them to talk, talk, and talk.

"I won't pretend it's going to be easy for them, you can't do that so easily to the mind. At Enniskillen we were told that if we just forgive the bombers, that will somehow help. But forgiveness is a gift you cannot give to someone who does not have repentance, and I don't think it does make it better."

David Bolton, who worked with victims at Enniskillen, is part of a community trauma team set up for Omagh. The work they have started will, he says, have to continue for a long time. "The dying and the bereaved have been deeply distressed by what they have seen and heard. The scale of human destruction is considerably greater, 28 killed and over 200 injured, and many of the injured are young people who will continue to be a reminder of what happened."

Eleven years on, Enniskillen is a very different place. As well as the medical, psychological and spiritual help, determined efforts were made to ensure the event was not exploited for religious strife, and in fact to make it a basis for breaking down barriers. Two men who had lost members of their family through terrorism played an instrumental role in this: Gordon Wilson, whose 20-year-old daughter Marie died, and John Maxwell, whose teenage son Paul was killed by the bomb used to assassinate Lord Mountbatten in 1979.

"I'm sure the people of



The site in Enniskillen where a bomb in 1987 killed 11 people (above), and the headlines showing how history repeated itself Brian Harris



as MP for Fermanagh and South Tyrone, and expressions of condolence by Catholics who did not feel genuine grief for what had happened." He says that perhaps not all of those who were bereaved are at peace about it "but I think that most of them have reached a certain level of pain that they are prepared to live with".

Martin Callaghan, a Catholic, became involved in cross-community projects, and it brought him into regular contact for the first time with Protestants, and their insecurity and apprehension.

"It is a bit of a cliché, saying that some good will come of it, but I think it did in Enniskillen. I think people stood back and

thought, 'Where are we going? What are we doing to ourselves?' and a lot of us began to believe that a political idea simply is not worth this kind of cost."

There was extensive trauma counselling for children at Enniskillen after the bomb. One of those who took part was Paul Douglas, who was 11 at the time. Today, he says that it would never be possible to eradicate what had happened from his mind, but the sessions did help him to adjust better. "It wasn't just me, a lot of my schoolmates felt the same way. Unfortunately, I wasn't very far away when the bomb went off and saw some of what happened. I had the usual symptoms, wetting the bed, having nightmares and not wanting to be alone."

"I am afraid the same thing will happen to a lot of kids in Omagh, especially those who have lost members of their family. I am afraid this is just one of the costs of growing up in Northern Ireland."

Queen to lead Omagh service

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE
AND ALAN MURDOCH

THE QUEEN is to lead mourners at a formal service in memory of the victims of the Omagh bombing outrage, Downing Street announced yesterday.

The Duke of Edinburgh and the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, will also attend the service, the date and venue for which have yet to be finalised.

A No 10 spokesman said Mr Blair believed that the wishes of the relatives of the victims should be "paramount", and therefore the timing, location and form of the service would be decided in consultation with them.

The news emerged as towns across Ireland – both north and south – were expected to fall quiet today for a minute's silence in memory of the victims.

In Omagh itself, the Irish President, Mary McAleese, will join Northern Ireland's political leaders and up to 20,000 other people in a remembrance service, close to the site of the blast.

In Belfast, St Peter's Roman Catholic cathedral will ring its funeral bell, with the names of the victims read out between each toll.

Elsewhere, the leaders of the four main churches in Northern Ireland, who will all attend the Omagh service, have asked that people observe a silence at 3.10pm – the time at which the bomb exploded last Saturday.

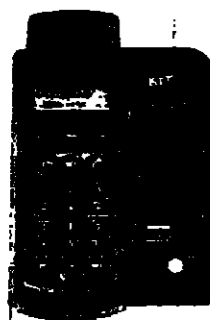
The Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, who will also attend the service, yesterday urged everyone in Ireland to observe the silence.

Twenty-eight people died in the blast. Of the 78 injured survivors still in hospital, eight are critically ill.

Two men are still being questioned by the RUC over the blast.

The police yesterday released Shane Mackey, 19, the son of the Omagh councillor Francis Mackey, chairman of the 32 County Sovereign Committee. Two others have already been released.

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The Great 1

How you and your pe

Weldon attacks lucky crystals, low birth rates and the abuse of women's power

THE WRITER Fay Weldon has launched her strongest critique of feminism to date, claiming yesterday that the feminist revolution is now stripping men of their dignity.

She said it was time to stop blaming men for unequal pay, and to recognise that women chose to forgo career advancement to stay at home with their babies.

The novelist ensured that she would further outrage feminist ideologists, who have already castigated her for suggesting that the legal system should reflect that there are "varying degrees of rape".

Yesterday she went considerably further in her argument for a redefinition of feminist values. Delivering the Scotsman Millennium Lecture at the Edinburgh Book Festival, she said that sexism now flowed two ways - "something we find difficult to admit."

"Evidence of continuing male prejudice against women comes from the fact that the female wage is persistently lower than the male wage, though in Britain the gap is smaller than in the rest of Europe," she said.

"But it is not for the most part the villainy and prejudice of men that leads to this undoubtedly inequity: it is the fact that the majority of women end up with children."

"Even when partnered, many back off when the time comes for promotion, deciding that time for a personal and emotional life is more valuable than promotion. The part-time nurse does not take the job as full-time ward sister, the TV researcher turns down the job as producer, because when would they ever get to see the kids?"

Ms Weldon said that instead of struggling for equal wages "we would be better occupied turning men into resident and supporting fathers, instead of dismissing them from the case and saying 'Which way to the sperm bank?' or 'How dare you treat me like this?' or 'Oh, I can manage alone and anyway there's always the CSA, not to mention benefits'."

Society, she said, had to accept men were parents too. "On the day when the problem of the working father is talked about as often as is the problem of the working mother we will be getting somewhere. All children have two parents, though you'd never think it."

Ms Weldon devoted some of the hour-long lecture to warning of the dangers of the way women were using their growing sexual power. She said: "Today's young woman does the sexual picking and choosing: she has the power to reject and uses it no better than the

BY DAVID LISTER
Arts News Editor

young man ever did. Women discover the gender triumphalism that once was the male preserve.

"See it in the ads. One for Peugeot at the moment: a brisk, beautiful powerful young woman, followed by her droopy husband. She is saying to the salesman, 'It moves faster and it drinks less. Can they do the same for husbands?' Try role-reversing that one!"

"Does it matter? I suspect it does - it deprives men of their dignity: we all grow into what we are expected to be: this is

THE WORLD OF WELDON

"It's all right being a woman these days - but it must be terrible being a man. They're quite right to be frightened and defensive."

"It is very unfashionable to say this, but (rape) isn't the worst thing that can happen to a woman - if you're safe, alive and unmarked after the event."

On being subject to an attempted rape when she was a young woman: "It was nasty, but it didn't shatter my view of men. The man in the taxi simply wanted sex."

"Sexual harassment is another peculiar area that fails to separate the unpleasant use of power to obtain sexual favours, from misconstrued signals."

"I would strenuously advise ... against having children. As soon as you have a baby, you've had it."

On New Labour - "Just a lot of people in love with Tony Blair."

"(Feminism's) gone too far. Now women diminish men in the way that men used to diminish women."

How she would word a lonely hearts ad: "Hopeless female requires not quite so hopeless male."

"Outside London, even moderately educated people have the pace and schedule of their lives dictated by Radio 4."

Has she abandoned the sisterhood? "I can't have, because I was never there. There is no headquarters, you know."

the process of socialisation. Once women were indeed the little squeaking helpless domestic creatures the culture expected them to be. If we expect men to be laddish and appalling that is how they will turn out."

Ms Weldon made a prediction guaranteed to fuel angry debate among feminists: the lifestyle of the lone emancipated woman was bad news for the future of Britain, she warned.

She said: "The world has changed, the laws have changed, she [the new woman] is out into the world. She may be lonely at night sometimes but she has her freedom and her financial independence, she can earn, she can spend, she can party. She can choose her sexual partners, but is not likely to stick with them: somehow she outranks them."

"She knows well enough that if she has a baby all this will end. And so, increasingly she chooses not to. The fertility rate, 2.5 in 1991, is now down to 1.5 and falling, below replacement level. Which may be OK for the future of the universe but isn't good news for the nation. We lose our brightest and best."

As the anniversary of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales approaches, Ms Weldon bewailed the results of the feminisation of Britain's cultural and social attitudes.

She said: "It is my belief that the bearded Patriarch finally slid out the Great West Door of the Abbey and took to his heels on the day of Diana's funeral whilst Elton John was singing 'Candle in the Wind'."

"Now the all-embracing Matriarch takes his place. This is the age of empathy: we are crushed under the excess weight of it. How superstitious we have become. Not a newspaper without its horoscope, we study feng-shui, wear lucky crystals round our necks - even those of us who appear to be most rational."

Politics too had been feminised, with New Labour speaking in the "traditional female language of caring and feeling apology and sentiment".

Therapists and counsellors have taken the place of the old Patriarchal priesthood. "They are the new hardeners, forgiving our sins for the payment of money, releasing us from personal guilt. Seek the authenticity of your own feelings they cry. Go it alone! You know you can! Assert yourself, your right to dignity, to personal fulfilment! Never settle for second best. And of course they are right, except, in the face of such stirring advice, and because in the new Garden of Eden men and women could, marriages and relationships crumble and collapse."



Fay Weldon, who says it is time to recognise that women chose to forgo career advancement to stay at home with their babies

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Mandela to broker peace in Congo

WITH RWANDA warning that it is prepared for war and Angolan and Zimbabwean troops poised to intervene in the Rwandan-backed rebellion in the Democratic Republic of Congo, President Nelson Mandela of South Africa will today make a desperate attempt to broker a deal to avert a regional catastrophe.

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe became the first foreign leader to send troops to the Congo to prop up the regime of President Laurent Kabila against the rebels. It said Namibia had already flown weapons to the Congo capital, Kinshasa, to aid Mr Kabila.

Yesterday there were reports of Angolan troops gathering in the enclave of Cabinda, on the Congolese border, near rebel-held territory. Fears are growing that their intervention against the rebels could result in spreading war across central Africa.

The risks are soaring two days after Mr Mugabe split the 14-nation Southern African Development Community (SADC) with his promise of foreign military aid to Kabila. A South African analyst said: "If the violence continues, it will consume us all."

With Mr Mandela hosting a summit today between Mr Kabila, President Pasteur Bizimungu of Rwanda, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda - the second outside sponsor of the rebellion - and Mr Mugabe, the analyst added that he hoped the leaders would "see sense". Mr Mandela, chairman of the SADC and critic of Mr

BY MARY BRAID
in Johannesburg
and ROSS HERBERT
in Kinshasa

Mugabe's move, will host a second meeting of the SADC's 14 members, tomorrow.

In Kinshasa, diplomats said they expected the world powers to stay out of the crisis and that Mr Mandela's initiative was the best hope. "The question now is whether overt Zimbabwean support will encourage overt Rwandan support," said a diplomat. "If things turn in one direction one can see the whole continent at war."

In Kinshasa there is talk of partition of the Congo, formerly Zaire, if the rebels closing on Kinshasa take it and Mr Kabila flees to his tribal base in Katanga. The political balance in the region has also been shaken by the US strikes against Sudan. America supports Uganda, which is fighting several Sudanese-backed rebel groups that have been using Congolese territory in their war with Uganda, leading Uganda to back last year's rebellion in the former Zaire. The rebellion installed Mr Kabila and overthrew the former dictator, Mobutu Sese Seko.

Mr Kabila's failure to secure the borders of his former sponsors - Uganda and Rwanda - prompted their attempt to oust him. Rwanda is furious that Mr Kabila has failed to stop the Hutu militiamen responsible for the 1994 genocide of 800,000 Rwandan Tutsis and who have been using eastern Congo as a base.



Protesters in George yesterday after PW Botha had been sentenced for refusing to testify on his role during the apartheid era

Reuters

Botha fined for defying truth panel

SOUTH AFRICA'S apartheid-era president, PW Botha, was ordered yesterday to pay a 10,000 rand (£1,000) fine or face 12 months in jail after being found guilty of contempt for ignoring subpoenas to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Mr Botha, 82, has called the TRC, charged with exposing the atrocities of the apartheid years, a "circus" and a "witch-hunt" against Afrikaners.

He immediately launched an appeal against his sentence and conviction, and was released on R50 bail.

It was a predictable move from a man who has spent more than a year defying TRC requests and demands that he

BY MARY BRAID
in Johannesburg

give evidence about human rights abuses, including murders and torture, committed while he was in office.

During his era as chairman of the State Security Council in the turbulent mid-1980s, thousands of blacks were killed and jailed without trial.

Former security-force members who have testified to the TRC have directly implicated Mr Botha in bombings and have claimed that they carried out murders and torture with his authority.

But Mr Botha denied any involvement in illegal actions and refused to apologise for ei-



PW Botha: Accused Tutu of conducting witch-hunt

ther his own, or his government's, abuses. Mr Botha ignored three summonses to testify before the commission.

The TRC did everything it could to avoid taking Mr Botha to court.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the TRC chairman, and President Nelson Mandela tried to persuade him to take part in the reconciliation process, which it is hoped, will help heal South Africa's wounds.

However, the TRC was also aware of a potential public-relations disaster in the prosecution of an old and frail man. There were concerns that he might become a rallying point for right-wing resistance to the new order. In the end, his court appearances attracted only a few supporters.

Yesterday a black magistrate, Victor Lugaju, said that

the jail sentence, suspended for five years, would be imposed if Mr Botha snubbed the TRC again. But it is a hollow victory for the TRC.

For Mr Botha may never face testifying again: the TRC's mandate to investigate human rights violations expired last month.

Mr Botha will only be called again if the amnesty committee - which may grant indemnity to perpetrators of apartheid-era abuses in return for full disclosure - subpoenas him to answer questions.

Mr Botha showed no emotion after he was sentenced and left the court building in George, on the south-east coast, looking relaxed.

Suu Kyi party to defy military

BY AUNG HLA TUN

BURMA'S opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) turned up the heat on the military government yesterday by saying it would shortly convene a "people's parliament".

The NLD, led by Aung San Suu Kyi, who won the Nobel prize for Peace in 1991, had set yesterday as a deadline for the government to convene a parliament of members elected in the country's last general elections in 1990. The NLD won that poll by a landslide but the military government has ignored the result, saying the country needed a constitution before a parliament could be convened.

The NLD announced that it "will convene a people's parliament comprising people's representatives of the national races within a short period". It was a challenge to the military, which has been in direct power since 1988 when it crushed a nationwide uprising for democracy.

On Thursday, a government spokesman dismissed the NLD demand, saying: "Calling for a parliament in the absence of a constitution is like forcing a bald person to dye his hair."

As the NLD made its announcement, Ms Suu Kyi was about 20 miles outside Rangoon, spending a 10th day in a roadside protest. She and three supporters have been stuck in a minivan on a small bridge at the village of Anyarsu since 12 August, having been denied permission to travel to the west of the country and in turn refusing government demands to return to Rangoon.

The NLD vice chairman, Tin Oo, said yesterday that Ms Suu Kyi would hold out until the government released 97 detained party members, even though her blood pressure was low and she was showing signs of jaundice.

A lady not for turning. Weekend Review, page 3

Holocaust gain comp

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Monica Lewinsky leaves the court house after giving further information to the grand jury

Lewinsky keeps Clinton on the rack over affair

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton's legal difficulties are far from over, if a wealth of detail emerging yesterday from Monica Lewinsky's second day before the grand jury is correct.

According to lengthy reports carried in US newspapers, Ms Lewinsky was asked very specific questions about the nature of her relationship with Mr Clinton and about what she did with presents he had given her. These are two points on which her original testimony two weeks before and Mr Clinton's testimony on Monday are widely reported to differ.

The preciseness of yesterday's reports contrasted with the sketchy accounts of Ms Lewinsky's testimony two weeks earlier, when the main information conveyed was that she had admitted to "a certain sort of sex" with the President, subsequently clarified as oral sex. This fact was reported to have been implicitly confirmed by Mr Clinton under questioning on Monday.

Recalled before the grand jury on Thursday, Ms Lewinsky apparently gave prosecutors the potentially damaging information that the President

BY MARY DEJEVSKY
in Washington

touched and fondled her breasts and genitals.

The significance of these disclosures is that such contact would come unambiguously under the definition of sexual relations used by lawyers in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case in January, the occasion on which Mr Clinton categorically denied having sexual relations with Ms Lewinsky.

In his televised statement after giving testimony last Monday, Mr Clinton said that while he had not "volunteered information", his answers to Ms Jones's lawyers had been "legally accurate". The definition of "sexual relations", according to the edited transcript of his evidence then, was "when the person knowingly engages in or causes... contact with the genitalia, anus, groin, breast, inner thigh, or buttocks of any person with an intent to arouse or gratify the sexual desire of any person".

This gave him the technical opportunity to deny the relationship if the main activity was oral sex and she was the

one active participant - which he did. If, however, he did touch and fondle her as she apparently described, his denial of "sexual relations" according to the agreed definition may not have been "legally accurate", leaving him open to the accusation of perjury.

The other line of questioning described yesterday relates to presents - including a book, T-shirt, an antique brooch and a hatpin - that Mr Clinton agrees he gave to Ms Lewinsky. She reportedly confirmed that Mr Clinton's personal secretary, Betty Currie, came to her flat in person, saying she believed Ms Lewinsky had "some things" for her.

No one denies the presents ended up with Ms Currie. What is contested is whether he instigated their transfer, or whether Ms Lewinsky arranged the transfer unprompted. Any prompting from Mr Clinton could help to substantiate the accusation that he tried to obstruct the course of justice by concealing evidence.

In his televised admission on Monday night, he said he had told the grand jury "and I say to you now, that at no time did

I ask anyone to lie, to hide or destroy evidence or to take any other unlawful action".

If Mr Clinton engineered the removal of the presents, which were then subject to subpoena as evidence in the Paula Jones case, this was illegal.

Before attending the courthouse on Thursday - a four-hour appearance that was thoroughly eclipsed by the end of the day by US military action in Sudan and Afghanistan - Ms Lewinsky had let the American media know of her unhappiness with Mr Clinton's admission.

The garnet of US newspapers carried comments attributed to "friends" of hers, saying that she was "hurt" and "angered", in particular by the absence of any apology to her, or her family, and by the implication that the almost two-year relationship was merely a matter of "sexual servicing".

She has insisted throughout that there was an emotional and psychological bond between them. The inference of the reports was that, having earlier steered clear of implicating Mr Clinton in obstructing justice, Ms Lewinsky might now be considerably harsher.

Holocaust slaves set to gain compensation

FEAR OF A Swiss banks-style public relations disaster for German businesses is forcing firms that used slave labour during the Third Reich to compensate the former workers.

The recent capitulation by Swiss banks, which, after years of stonewalling, agreed this month to set up a \$1bn compensation fund, may prompt German companies to follow suit, thus deflecting the threat of lawsuits from former slave labourers or their descendants.

Volkswagen has announced it will set up its own compensation fund for individual victims and BMW is also ready to pay. Other major companies such as Siemens are not excluding the possibility of compensating former slave labourers and may also pay into a central fund.

VW, whose slave labourers during the war were often beaten or worked to death, denies

BY ADAM LEBOR
in Budapest

it has a legal responsibility to compensate Holocaust survivors. Instead, company officials say they are making a humanitarian gesture. They say companies such as VW were forced to use slave labour.

"From a legal position the crimes of the Nazis were a state crime, and the issue of slave labour compensation must be addressed to the government, but this is a recognition of our historical and moral responsibilities," said Bernd Graef, head of Volkswagen archives.

The record of German big business and the German government on compensating former slave labourers is shameful, Jewish groups and some historians say. Firms and the government have stonewalled and opposed every move to recognising their liability.

It took a 12-year campaign to achieve compensation for 21 women who worked in a munitions factory near Auschwitz. One of the women eventually received £5,500.

Former slave workers for IG Farben, the chemical company that owned the patent on Zyklon B, the gas used in the death camps, are still campaigning for compensation like that given by VW. "The German government has never acknowledged its obligation to give full compensation for slave labour - it has opposed survivors' claims at every turn and defended these corporations against legal liability," said Michael Pinto-Duschinsky, a historian researching the issue for the Holocaust Education Trust.

"The majority of major German companies are to a large extent the same ones who used slave labour in the Third Reich."

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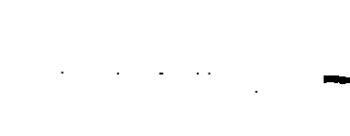
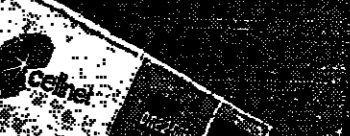
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Using stealth to catch a family without going ape

IT HAS been monkey business as usual this week for Iqbal Malik, New Delhi's most prominent primatologist. This scientist watches out for India's red-rumped rhesus monkeys with as much passion as Jane Goodall champions chimpanzees or as the late Dian Fossey guarded her gentle mountain gorillas in Rwanda. Dr Malik's biggest challenge is to prevent conflict between monkeys - who are considered sacred by Hindus - and humans. Almost 60 per cent of India's monkey population now lives alongside people in crowded urban areas.

A WEEK IN THE LIFE OF IQBAL MALIK, MONKEY PROTECTOR



Dr Iqbal Malik: Passion for rhesus monkeys

"These monkeys deserve peaceful co-existence from animals who are supposed to be their descendants," said Dr Malik. "First, Indians treat them as gods, and then as pests. It's just not fair. Fear is a normal response. Rhesus are the fiercest of all the primates in Asia - excluding humans, of course. They have the largest canine teeth. So intimidation is what they do best." She rolled up her sleeve to show a lotus pattern of toothmarks on her forearm.

Educating human communities about monkey behaviour, and vice versa, is her job. If it proves impossible for the groups to get along, she relocates the monkey troops to a more isolated environment. Meanwhile, showing how to monkey-proof rubbish tips and hospital waste heaps improves living conditions for thousands of Indians.

Last Friday, Dr Malik supervised the transfer of 40 wild monkeys from nets to temporary cages. Complaints came from a military base: aggressive monkeys had been messing up the mess hall and Dr Malik's volunteer team, Vatsavaran, was asked to help.

They located a greenbelt far enough away from the base where the monkeys could be freed. Getting them there without cruelty was tricky; persuading them to remain required expertise.

Trapping monkeys in India for use in medical experiments was outlawed 20 years ago after a national outrage against using the sacred creatures to test radiation tolerance in the United States. Dr Malik knows, however, that there is no shortage of trap-

pers. She swears her own personally designed nets are "monkey friendly".

Early last Friday, Usman and Kuber, who have worked with Dr Malik for a decade, buried a big pentagonal net in the ground with considerable stealth. Ten observers had been watching monkeys make mischief at the base and worked out their group dynamics. To capture an entire family group at one go, Usman had to yank the trigger string at precisely the right moment.

"We cannot ever let monkeys watch our preparations or they'll catch on. Monkey see, monkey do," said Dr Malik. Dimming the light by covering the cages with blankets was a priority all during Saturday, when the colony of monkeys was shifted in a convoy to Zakira forest, less than 30km away. "Darkness calms them and the monkeys hug each other for comfort," Dr Malik explained. If rival males are caged together by mistake, havoc results and the entire group shrieks and whoops. Once they make little grooming noises and thumbsucking sounds under the covers, the families are cosy.

At Zakira forest, Dr Malik spent Saturday night pitching tents and giving the caged monkeys water and food. They all arrived exactly at dusk, when they were most likely to settle. The primates soon learnt to forage in this green cover. When their cages were first undraped, 40 monkeys

blinked and glanced around. Too wary to explore the new forest in the dark, they slept behind bars by choice. But within 36 hours, they were scampering in the trees.

On Sunday morning, the Vatsavaran team placed juicy oranges and tomatoes under the best climbing trees. Fresh leaves and plump insect grubs were laid out. While some monkey troops take up to four days to adjust to a new habitat, these clearly felt at home by mid-morning. Dr Malik drove home with a grin.

On Monday, she hennaed her hair and completed backlogged paperwork for the Ministry of Environment. Her teenage son, Dev Kabir, chatted about organising a school trip to her paper recycling scheme. Dr Malik sorted slides and fielded telephone calls till late Tuesday. Monkeys were running amok in a school cafeteria and a pensioner wanted to evict a fierce monkey from his bathroom.

"I tell people never to look monkeys in the eye. It's hostile. Avoid leaving food out. If ignoring them won't make the monkeys leave, hit the ground with a stick, set off a firecracker or get a fake snake to frighten them. Dogs are another deterrent," Dr Malik said.

Wednesday was spent reviewing for the next day's meeting with Mr Shaker, the new monkey regulator at the All India Institute for Medical Science. It is almost impossible to keep visitors from feeding monkeys in the hospital wards, because they think the holy creatures will bring patients luck. The primates grab fruit intended for patients, steal sugar-coated pills and even rip out intravenous tubes to drink the sweet glucose solution. They touch up restrained patients, tear their clothing and shred the sheets.

On Thursday, Dr Malik keeps mulling over ideas for her hospital meeting, only to learn it has been postponed. Still concerned about the constipated pensioner, she phoned and found him flush with triumph. He got rid of the monkey in his bathroom at last.



Chinese soldiers carry sandbags to reinforce an embankment to protect Wuhan, in Hubei Province, from the swollen River Yangtze after the sixth flood crest passed through the town on Thursday. The sixth crest was the biggest so far AP

East Berliners prepare to repel Bonn invaders

Imre Karacs visits unsettled Mitte on a journey around the German regions ahead of the country's elections on 27 September

ENCIRCLED BY wine bars, posh restaurants and the hottest nightclub in town, the regulars of the pub Mariola sip their beer as they reminisce about the good old days. About the time when beer cost 51 pfennigs, when rents were cheap and everyone had a job. When the Wall stood.

"Before, I had money but could not travel," said the landlord, Ralf Jäckel. "Now I can travel but have no money."

Lots of other things have changed too. The run-down apartment blocks across the tramline are being beautifully restored. The biggest, the vibrant interlocking courtyards of the Hackescher Markt, are the "in" place of the new Berlin. The action has moved east: to Mitte, literally "Middle", the district from which all of Germany will be governed from next year.

Midte is replete with history: cool, sleazy, at times elegant, but never boring. It has a massive culture shock in store for the Bonn bureaucrats who will soon be arriving with their filing cabinets.

And perhaps a political shock too: in the last general elections four years ago, the constituency was captured by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the heirs of the Communist regime.

"It would be great if we could keep Mitte red," said Peter Lorf, a PDS spokesman. "Imagine how annoying that would be to those Bonn politicians."

Red it will be after the elections of 27 September. The only question is which shade. All over Berlin, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrats,

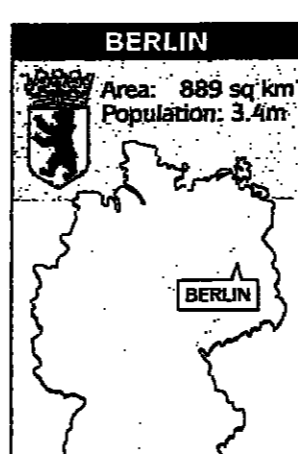
the biggest party in the regional elections three years ago, are heading for a drubbing. In the constituency of Mitte-Prenzlauer Berg, their share of the vote may not even reach two figures.

"In the last nine years, Helmut Kohl has achieved very little," Mr Jäckel said. "He promises and promises before the elections, but nothing ever comes of it." Of the chances of the Social Democrats, led by Gerhard Schröder in the national campaign, the landlord is equally dismissive. "Schröder is also making great promises. But the Social Democrats are not a workers' party. People here will vote for the PDS, or the extreme right out of frustration. They are the parties of protest."

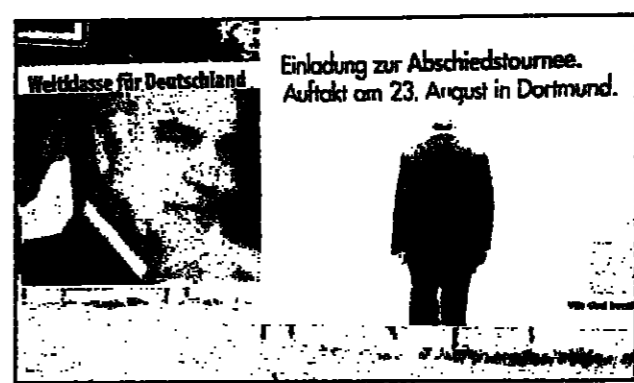
There is so much to protest about. One in three is unemployed, and those that do have jobs earn just enough to keep up with the soaring rents. The regulars are fed up with having to pay DM3 (€1) for a small glass of beer at the pub, when you can get it for 80 pfennigs at the supermarket.

The landlord cites the high rent he has to pay. The building is now owned by a Japanese company that has big plans for renovation. If it goes ahead, the rents go up again, Mr Jäckel fears it will be "the end of the working man's pub". His is the last one in the neighbourhood. His 22-year-old daughter is angry because she did an apprenticeship in waitressing but cannot get a job. She says she is being discriminated against, for being an Ossi (an easterner).

Frank Stiller, a toothless janitor who has been coming to the pub since 1949, is angered by all the above, by arrogant Wests taking everything over, not to mention all the foreigners who work on the local building sites.



BERLIN
Area: 889 sq km
Population: 3.4m



The German Social Democratic Party poster reads: "Invitation for farewell tour. Start on August 23" in front of a poster of Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Christian Democrat party Reuters

already on the national stage. The PDS is fielding the little-known Petra Pau.

In the last elections, the PDS captured four constituencies, all in East Berlin. Two of these look safe. Mitte is number three on the winnable list.

Now it becomes complicated. To qualify for a share of its national vote, a party must capture three constituencies, or obtain 5 per cent of the votes cast nationwide. With its four constituencies the last time, the PDS ended up with 30 seats in

the Bundestag. If the PDS does not get its three constituencies now, the "lost" votes would be distributed among the bigger parties. Such an outcome would improve the chances of the likely winners - the Social Democrats - of unseating Chancellor Kohl.

The regulars of the Mariola, however, have more important battles on their minds. "We'll sort these Bonners out when they come here," said Mr Stiller, his fist flying erratically through the air.

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Kohl has five weeks left to turn the tide

THE PHONEY war is over. Germany's election campaign enters the "hot phase" today with a Woodstock-style happening organised by the Social Democrats in Bonn, followed by a Christian Democrat rally at a Dortmund arena tomorrow.

After that, leading politicians will be on the road until election day on 27 September. Chancellor Helmut Kohl has five weeks to overturn the feeling that his 16-year reign has been long enough.

In the dog days of the summer months, the Christian Democrats have clawed their way back from an eight-point deficit, now lying no more than perhaps three points in the polls

BY IMRE KARACS

behind the Social Democrats. But in personal popularity ratings, Gerhard Schröder, the Social Democrat challenger, is up to 20 points ahead of the incumbent. His campaign promises to be the glitziest in the Federal Republic's history, with strong emphasis on television and soundbites.

To remain Chancellor for a fifth term, Mr Kohl needs an "absolute majority" in the Bundestag: half the total number of MPs plus one. MPs, in turn, are elected by a mixture of first-past-the-post and a proportional system.

There are 328 constituencies

in Germany. Each sends one MP to the Bundestag.

The other half of the Bundestag is filled from the parties' voting lists. Germany's 60.5 million electors must tick two ballot papers: one to choose their local MP and the other to support their favoured party.

A party must obtain 5 per cent of the national vote to qualify for its share. This is the route taken by the Greens and the Free Democrats, who are not strong enough to win a single constituency.

Alternatively, a party that wins three constituencies but falls below the 5 per cent threshold nationwide also gets its proportional share.

Handwritten note: 20/11/98

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E-mail: IndyBusiness@Independent.co.uk

BUSINESS

17

BRIEFING

Monument warns on oil tax policy



TONY CRAVEN WALKER, chairman of Monument Oil & Gas, warned yesterday that the company's plans to develop the Fyne oilfield in the North Sea are being delayed by uncertainty over the Government's policy on taxing North Sea oil revenues.

Reporting a 15 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to \$5.7m for the half year to 30 June, Mr Craven Walker (left) said this had been achieved against a corresponding 30 per cent fall in average oil prices. Monument shares were unchanged on the day at 43.5p in a falling market.

Monument said that the sudden fall in the crude oil price has tended to override investor sentiment in the sector and obscure the progress made by the company. Mr Craven Walker said that the economic background for oil and gas producers was particularly difficult.

In the past six months Monument has said that it has made a major new gas discovery in Pakistan, signed important new agreements in the Caspian region and restructured the group's finances.

Retailer stretches back into profit

BROWN & JACKSON, the cut-price retail group that owns Poundstretcher and What Everyone Wants, has continued its recovery with a bounce back into profit.

The company, controlled by South Africa's Pepkor group, produced profits of \$7.5m in the year to June against a \$2.7m loss the previous year. What Everyone Wants and Your More store - acquired by Brown & Jackson last year - made a pre-exceptional operating profit of \$3m, helped by lower costs and better margins.

Christo Wiese, chairman, said: "By any standard this is a remarkable recovery. The results show a dramatic turnaround in the position of the group."

Brown & Jackson shares, languishing at 16p a year ago, closed down 1p at 74p. They stood at 351.5p in 1993.

Boosted by its success the group is planning to accelerate its expansion programme with 14 more Poundstretchers and five more What Everyone Wants.

Like-for-like sales dipped 1.6 per cent partly due to a product mix change away from lower margin ranges. Sales rose from £187m to £277m. There is no dividend as the company wants to go on investing in the business.

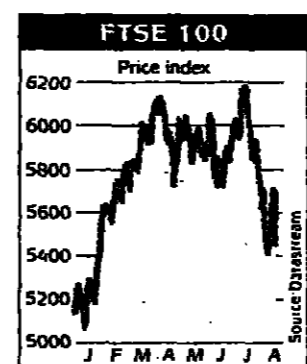
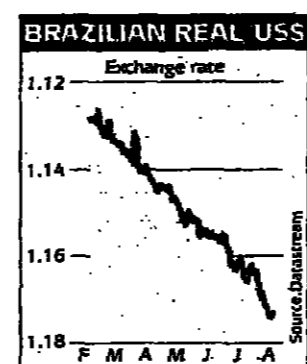
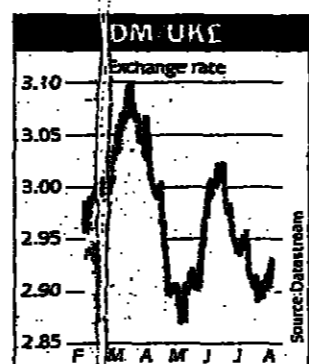
World markets in free fall as Russian panic spreads

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

FINANCIAL MARKETS around the globe were in free fall yesterday as fears that the crisis hitting Russia is about to engulf other emerging markets sent investors scurrying for cover worldwide.

The FTSE 100 index closed 190.4 points down at 5,477, one of its worst points falls ever, having at one stage fallen by more than 212 points. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones was trading more than 240 points off at 8,368.36. Bonds rallied sharply, with yields slumping to record lows on Wall Street as investors sought the safe haven of the US Treasury market.

US banks like JP Morgan, Citicorp and Chase Manhattan, which have big positions in emerging market debt, were among the biggest fallers in a day of panic trading. Credit Suisse, the Swiss banking par-



ent of Credit Suisse First Boston also fell sharply in Zurich, on a deepening fears that it is facing a huge loss from the Russian crisis.

The biggest casualties in a day of frantic trading were currencies and local debt markets in Asia, Latin America and Eastern Europe. These were collapsing as investors took the cue from the latest Russian upheaval to bail out of

emerging markets in force. Yesterday, the Turkish authorities were intervening to support the lira, the South African rand was under pressure, and in Latin America the currencies of Mexico, Argentina and Brazil suffered big falls against the US dollar amid signs that the Venezuelan bolivar was about to go. Stock markets in Latin America saw falls of between 5 and 8 per cent.

Dealers said that this week's Russian crisis had brought home to investors that the governments of the big industrial nations have run out of patience with investors. The International Monetary Fund has little more than \$10bn in the kitty after shelling out some \$40bn (\$25bn) to fund rescues in Korea, Indonesia and Thailand in the past year.

"The IMF and the G7 have called a halt to easy bail-outs. The new international strategy is to play hardball," said Paul Horne, European equity markets economist at Salomon Smith Barney, the US investment bank.

Germany, which was under a cloud because of its banks' relatively high exposure to Russia, saw its stock market index, the DAX, fall by more than 4 per cent. A meeting between representatives of the big Russian banks and the Russian authorities failed to provide much in the way of reassurance.

"The appetite for risk in the world has gone to an all-time low," said Stuart Brown, head of emerging market research at Paribas, the French bank. "People are saying - we don't know where or when the next shock is going to come from: China? Hong Kong? more in Russia? Latin America? - let's get out together."

The pound, by contrast, had a good day in the exchanges as domestic worries took a back seat to concerns about far more serious problems elsewhere.

Sterling soared a penny and a half to DM2.942 and was nearly a cent higher at \$1.6357. The yen weakened sharply despite rumours that the Bank of Japan was preparing to intervene in the markets, trading at 145 compared with 143 on Thursday.

Who's next? Page 19

Holiday bonus as Thomson buys Crystal

THE MANAGEMENT team at holiday company Crystal International Travel is set to share a combined £26.5m after selling the business to Thomson Travel, Britain's largest tour operator.

It will be a second fortune for Peter Dyer, Crystal's chief executive. After founding the business in 1981 he sold it to Dial Corporation, an American group for around £4m in 1991.

He bought it back for less than £30m last October in a venture capital deal, and has now more than doubled his money in less than a year.

Mr Dyer, 47, will make £11m from selling Crystal for a second time. Crystal is Britain's leading ski holiday company, and with Thomson already ranked three in winter sports, the deal makes it a powerful player in the sector. It also gives Thomson positions in specialist vacations, such as lakes and mountain holidays, coach breaks and trips to Jersey, Italy and France.

This is the latest in a series of deals in the UK travel industry, which is rapidly consolidating around the three largest players.

In the last few months First Choice Holidays has snapped up Unifair and Hayes & Jarvis; Abtours has acquired Direct Holidays; and Sunworld, part of Thomas Cook, has bought Flying Colours, the travel business which includes the Club 18-30 operations.

"The Crystal deal is part of the on-going consolidation in the sector," said Jason Holden, who is a leisure analyst at BT Alex Brown. "It leads to economies of scale, great buying power, and, in this case, it gives Crystal access to Thomson's airline."

Paul Birrell, chief executive of Thomson, which floated on the stock market in May, said that the deal was part of its strategy to mirror its market leadership in mass market holidays with a similar position in specialist areas, such as skiing and city breaks.

However, he said the surge of deal making in the UK was drawing to a close. "There are not many medium-sized companies left," he said.

Crystal's businesses include Jetsave, which specialises in American holidays; Tropical Places, a direct sales operation; Crystal Ski; and Greyhound International, which books seats on American greyhound buses.

Crystal is expected to record profits of around £3.4m in the year to October on sales of £200m-plus.

It is expected to sell more than 400,000 holidays this year. Mr Dyer will stay on as chief executive of the business, which will be merged with Thomson's specialist tour operation.

Thomson is funding the deal from existing resources. The shares, floated at 170p, fell 3.5p to 154p.

BY NIGEL COPE
Associate City Editor

THE PRUDENTIAL denied reports yesterday that it was preparing to sack over 1,000 of its staff if they failed to meet stiff new productivity targets, as the company continued its drive to recover from the pensions mis-selling scandal.

The reports were prompted by the Pru's reaction to stinging criticism from the Financial Services Authority (FSA) over the group's part in the scandal. Sir Peter Davies, the Pru's chief executive, launched a campaign in January to "turn hunters into farmers", which involved retraining the entire 4,000-strong sales force.

This involved increasing the minimum business target for a 12-month period from £46,000 to £55,000. Around a third of the sales force appeared to be below this "professional economic business level" (PEBL), causing speculation that they might be fired.

Yesterday a spokesman for the Pru said: "This programme is being phased in over the next six months. There is no question that these people will be sacked. The idea is to improve productivity, and people falling below the PEBL will be given extra training."

David Parsons, a National Union of Insurance Workers (NUIW) national officer, said yesterday the union had agreed a "Professional Development Plan" with the Pru a month ago. "It's all part of the move away from commissions to salaries," he said. "Structured support will be provided to those (in the sales force) who fall below the PEBL." There will be an appeals process if they can't agree (levels) with their managers.

The spokesman for the Pru added that the sales force was being retrained so that it would put a higher priority on building portfolios of financial products for customers, rather than just aiming for one-off sales.

"This doesn't mean the sales people will suffer just that they will be paid in a different way," he said. "This new remuneration structure could be in place by next year," he concluded.



It's a blue sky ahead for Crystal ski breaks, now it has access to Thomson's airline

Pru sets tougher targets on sales

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

THE PRUDENTIAL denied reports yesterday that it was preparing to sack over 1,000 of its staff if they failed to meet stiff new productivity targets, as the company continued its drive to recover from the pensions mis-selling scandal.

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This involved increasing the minimum business target for a 12-month period from £46,000 to £55,000. Around a third of the sales force appeared to be below this "professional economic business level" (PEBL), causing speculation that they might be fired.

Yesterday a spokesman for the Pru said: "This programme is being phased in over the next six months. There is no question that these people will be sacked. The idea is to improve productivity, and people falling below the PEBL will be given extra training."

David Parsons, a National Union of Insurance Workers (NUIW) national officer, said yesterday the union had agreed a "Professional Development Plan" with the Pru a month ago. "It's all part of the move away from commissions to salaries," he said. "Structured support will be provided to those (in the sales force) who fall below the PEBL." There will be an appeals process if they can't agree (levels) with their managers.

The spokesman for the Pru added that the sales force was being retrained so that it would put a higher priority on building portfolios of financial products for customers, rather than just aiming for one-off sales.

"This doesn't mean the sales people will suffer just that they will be paid in a different way," he said. "This new remuneration structure could be in place by next year," he concluded.

ICA expels Polly Peck accountant

THE ACCOUNTANT who acted as Asil Nadir's right hand man at the collapsed Polly Peck empire has been dismissed from the Institute of Chartered Accountants five years after criminal charges against him were dropped.

John Turner, the former chief accountant at Polly Peck, was thrown out after the Joint Disciplinary Scheme - the body which regulates the profession

BY NIGEL COPE

- found that Mr Turner's conduct fell below that expected of members "due to his involvement in inappropriate transactions" and the "preparation of inaccurate documents".

Mr Turner admitted 10 charges brought by the tribunal. The sums involved amounted to £7.5m. The charges included covering up the transfer of funds

from Polly Peck accounts into Unipac, a Polly Peck subsidiary. Some of these funds were used for Mr Nadir's personal benefit, the tribunal concluded. "Some of the actions had no commercial reason and it must have been clear what was going on," the JDS said.

An 11th complaint - that Mr Turner provided large sums of cash to Mr Nadir from the Unipac account without sufficient

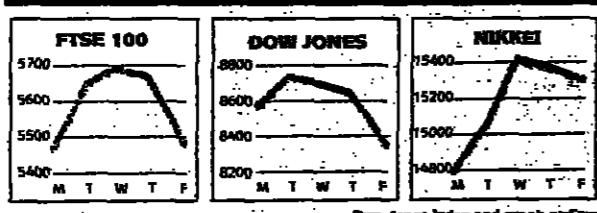
documentation - was dismissed. Expulsion is the most severe penalty available under the institute's rules, although Mr Turner has not been fined. Mr Turner, 59, is now working as a book-keeper.

Mr Turner became chief accountant at Polly Peck in 1986 and stayed with it as it grew to become a FTSE 100 company with a market value of £1.7bn. The business collapsed in 1990

and Mr Nadir subsequently fled to northern Cyprus. Mr Turner had been due to stand trial with the fugitive tycoon.

A separate case is due to be heard against Polly Peck's auditors, Stoy Hayward, next year. The JDS this week imposed a record £750,000 fine against the same firm for its role as auditor into Astra Holdings, the munitions company that collapsed in 1992.

STOCK MARKETS

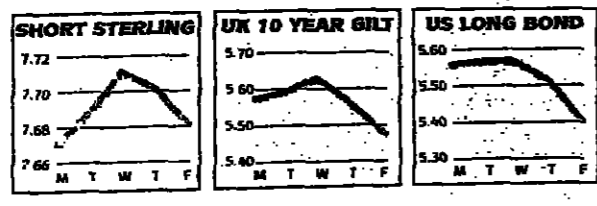


Source: Reuters and graphs on page 17

INDICES

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Vol
FTSE 100	5477.00	-190.40	-3.41	6183.70	4382.80	4.00
FTSE 250	3077.10	-82.20	-2.65	3570.90	2428.30	3.96
FTSE 350	2699.50	-84.10	-3.10	2988.10	2141.80	4.00
FTSE All Share	2847.51	-78.68	-2.76	3288.52	2106.58	3.98
FTSE SmallCap	2298.30	-33.30	-1.45	2793.80	2231.60	3.66
FTSE Fledgling	1286.10	0.00	0.00	1517.10	1224.20	4.03
FTSE AIM	998.10	0.00	0.00	1146.90	963.90	1.36
FTSE ERLC 100	970.15	-44.37	-4.57			
Dow Jones	8368.36	-209.08	-2.49	9367.84	6971.52	1.77
Nikkei	15296.20	-33.21	-0.21	15939.14	14488.21	1.30
Hong Kong	7377.61	-214.82	-2.87	16184.30	6544.79	5.44
Hong Kong	5163.51	-324.71	-6.12	6217.83	3487.24	3.11

INTEREST RATES



Source: Reuters and graphs on page 17

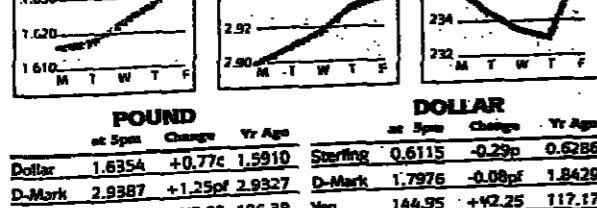
MONEY MARKET RATES

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year	15 year	20 year	30 year
UK	7.75	0.45	7.63	0.07	5.48	-1.55	5.20	-1.85		
US	5.69	-0.03	5.72	-0.28	5.22	-1.05	5.40	-1.22		
Japan	0.64	0.07	0.65	-0.02	1.47	-0.83	1.99	-0.84		
Germany	3.49	0.21	3.71	0.10	4.25	-1.39	4.99	-1.93		

BOND YIELDS

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	2 year	3 year	5 year	10 year	15 year	20 year	30 year
UK	7.75	0.45	7.63	0.07	5.48	-1.55	5.20	-1.85		
US	5.69	-0.03	5.72	-0.28	5.22	-1.05	5.40	-1.22		
Japan	0.64	0.07	0.65	-0.02	1.47	-0.83	1.99	-0.84		
Germany	3.49	0.21	3.71	0.10	4.25	-1.39	4.99	-1.93		

CURRENCIES



Source: Reuters and graphs on page 17

POUND

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Vol
Dollar	1.6354	+0.0076	+0.46	1.5910	1.5290	0.6286
D-Mark	2.9387	+1.2567	+42.80	2.9327	2.9327	0.6286
Yen	237.33	+95.02	+40.04	186.39	117.17	117.17
£ index	104.50	0.00	0.00	102.50	102.50	102.50

DOLLAR

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Vol
Sterling	0.6115	-0.0296	-4.84	0.6115	0.6115	0.6286
D-Mark	1.7976	-0.0867	-4.82	1.8429	1.8429	1.8429
Yen	144.95	+12.25	+8.46	117.17	117.17	117.17
£ index	114.40	0.00	0.00	106.50	106.50	106.50

OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Vol
Brent Oil (\$)	12.14	-0.16	-1.31	18.19	18.19	18.19
Gold (\$)	285.35	-0.50	-0.17	323.80	323.80	323.80
Silver (\$)	5.16	0.06	+1.16	4.52	4.52	4.52

Source: Bloomberg

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.6867	Mexican (nuevo peso)	13.94
Austria (schillings)	19.92	Netherlands (guilders)	3.1961
Belgium (francs)	58.57	New Zealand (\$)	3.1740
Canada (\$)	2.4273	Norway (kroner)	12.24
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8295	Portugal (escudos)	208.77
Denmark (kroner)	10.87	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9460
Finland (markka)	8.7177	Singapore (\$)	2.7531
France (francs)	9.5146	Spain (pesetas)	240.34
Germany (marks)	2.8310	South Africa (rand)	9.5292
Greece (drachma)	479.20	Sweden (kroner)	12.98
Hong Kong (\$)	1.20	Switzerland (francs)	2.7998
Ireland (pounds)	1.1292	Thailand (bahts)	62.27
India (rupees)	63.73	Turkey (liras)	431.703
Israel (shekels)	5.5937	USA (\$)	1.5958
Italy (lira)	2811		
Japan (yen)	230.12		
Malaysia (ringgits)	6.5846		
Malta (lira)	0.6171		

Source: Thomson Cook

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

EQUITIES CRASHED with Footsie losing 190.4 points to 5,477, one of its worst points falls ever, having at one stage fallen by more than 212 points. On Wall Street, the Dow Jones was trading more than 240 points off at 8,368.36. Bonds rallied sharply, with yields slumping to record lows on Wall Street as investors sought the safe haven of the US Treasury market.

NEW YORK

FEAR OF a snowballing global economic crisis and the fallout from US strikes on Afghanistan and Sudan ravaged Wall Street stocks. At midday the Dow was down 243 points, or 2.8 per cent, to 8,368.36. The Nasdaq composite fell 156.39 points, or 3.3 per cent, to 4,717.11.

TOKYO

STOCKS FELL moderately on Friday as Japan's third-largest 1998 corporate failure raised fears about the economy. The Nikkei 225 shed 93.21 points, or 0.61 per cent, to close at 15,296.20. Stocks started lower after a drop on Wall Street overnight and news that Japanese trading firm Okura would file for bankruptcy with debts of \$287.7m. The slide was stemmed by reports the government is preparing to financially support a merger of Long-Term Credit Bank of Japan and Sumitomo Trust and Banking.

HONG KONG

STOCKS LOST STEAM, closing lower in tandem with weaker overseas markets and lacking support from government buying, brokers said. The Hang Seng lost 214.9 points, or 2.8 per cent, to end at 7,527.6. Frederick Tsang at DBS Securities said: "To make intervention effective (the government) can't let the speculators know... their next move." Brokers said the hedge funds battle with government was likely to go on before contracts expired next week.

INDONESIA

INDONESIAN STOCKS fell after the government said it would not sell a majority stake in state cement company PT Semen Gresik to foreigners, casting doubt on the state's asset sale drive. The Stock Exchange Composite Index fell 11 points, or 0.75 per cent, to 388.3. Over the week, it has shed 3.6 per cent. Gresik plunged 23 per cent, accounting for almost a third of yesterday's decline alone. The stock rose as high as 14,125 last month on optimism about its possible sale to Semex of Mexico.

52 week				Low				High			
High	Low	Price	Chg	Vol	P/E	Div	Yield	Price	Chg	Vol	P/E
30	30	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
31	31	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
32	32	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
33	33	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
34	34	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
35	35	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
36	36	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
37	37	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
38	38	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
39	39	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
40	40	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
41	41	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
42	42	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
43	43	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
44	44	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
45	45	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
46	46	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
47	47	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
48	48	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
49	49	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
50	50	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
51	51	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
52	52	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
53	53	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
54	54	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
55	55	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
56	56	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
57	57	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
58	58	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
59	59	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
60	60	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
61	61	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
62	62	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
63	63	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
64	64	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
65	65	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
66	66	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00	100	10
67	67	100	0.00	100	10	0.00	0.00	100	0.00		

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THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 22 August 1998

BUSINESS/19

Emerging trend in market fall-out

RICHARD NIXON once gave a four-letter response to an Italian currency crisis. President Clinton was probably too embroiled yesterday in domestic woes and foreign adventures to pay much heed to the plight of the Venezuelan bolivar.

But, world financial centres were certainly transfixed by the upheaval, not just in Caracas but in emerging markets across the globe. Whether it was the delayed effect from the US missile strikes or the deepening crisis in Russia, who can say.

Whatever the trigger, the results were quite spectacular. The Mexican peso plunged, taking the stock market with it. The ripple effects spread across Latin America, leaving the Colombian peso at an all-time low and causing mayhem from Buenos Aires to Rio de Janeiro. Argentine stocks slumped 7 per cent. In Brazil the stock market samba came to a complete halt.

It was a similar tale in eastern Europe. The Polish zloty went on the slide and even currencies no-one has heard of had their 15 minutes of fame. In Bulgaria, the lev was in trouble. In Romania it was the lei.

And, of course, London and Wall Street felt the full force. The Footsie suffered its biggest one-day point fall since 1987, even though the level of trading was thin.



OUTLOOK

In a week when London has also staged its biggest one-day gain since the crash, it would be rash to attempt to call the market.

However, there does appear to be worrying trend developing. Individually, the emerging markets are not significant to the West. But collectively, they add up to a significant trading partner. What is worse, the emerging markets may decide that their troubles lie at the door of Western-style globalisation. That could provoke a political and social backlash, and an economic fall-out in the shape of controls on capital and trade.

This may all yet be too apocalyptic, but the warnings signs are there. It may still be too early to call Wall Street and London. But some sectors look a poor bet. Right now the banking sector with its exposure to emerging market debt and loan portfolios does not look the place to be.

New regulator can get it right this time

LIKE OUR NEW telecoms watchdog, the man who seems to be on a shortlist of one for the job of Britain's first combined energy regulator, has one important thing going for him. Callum McCarthy is available. Not right now, you understand, since he is on an extended walking holiday in the south of France.

Whether it is the walking or the holiday that has been extended is less clear. But as far as full-time employment goes, Mr McCarthy is fit and available for work, as they say down the JobCentre, having quit his post as chief executive of Barclays' US operations in April.

The financial rewards that come with being a regulator - even one charged with

doing the work of two men (alright one man and one woman) - are modest by investment banking standards. The going rate for the job of regulating the gas and electricity industries is £120,000 or more for an "exceptional candidate". Even if Mr McCarthy fits that bill, the remuneration will still be nothing compared to what he could have earned had he stuck with Barclays.

It is reasonable to assume that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry was not exactly knocked down by the rush of candidates applying for the post. In previous job searches, the Government's headhunters have had to comb the groves of academe to find suitable material.

Hardly surprising since the salaries are not competitive with private sector rates while the job itself is a thankless task. Squeezed between consumers who rarely think they get a fair share of the cake, and companies who resent the fact that their prices are controlled at all, the job of regulator is indeed a lonely one.

Henceforth, it will not be quite as lonely as it used to be. In virtually her last act in charge at the Department of Trade and Industry, Margaret Beckett decreed that individual regulators should be replaced by full-time executive boards comprising

a chairman and two others. Mr McCarthy's first task as chairman will be his most important one - deciding where the boardroom will be. The choice is between London, the current home of the outgoing gas regulator Clare Spottiswoode, or Birmingham, where the electricity regulator Stephen Littlechild has his billet.

Having run the show for Barclays in both Japan and America, the much-travelled Mr McCarthy may think nothing of shuttling between the two for a while. But ultimately he will only need one headquarters. Staff at Ofgas and Ofwat would probably like to know whether he kept a pied a terre over here while he was on his travels, and, if so, where.

Once the housekeeping has been sorted out, he has the task of making the deregulated domestic power market work. Given the teething troubles of gas liberalisation, the opening up of the domestic electricity market from this autumn has the capacity to turn into a fiasco of interesting proportions. If that proves to be the case, then Professor Littlechild may be less keen to spend that much time handing over the reins to his successor.

The really big job facing the regulator is to help decide what the energy market

will look like in five years time and how many players it will have. With PowerGen awaiting approval for its takeover of East Midlands, London Electricity quite possibly falling to another generator and Midlands Electricity seeking a merger with another regional electricity company (REC), there is scope for every variant of integration imaginable.

In his previous incarnations (Kleinwort Benson and then BZW), Mr McCarthy had a hand in shaping the structure that we see now. It was a deeply flawed model, driven largely by the previous administration's privatisation timetable. The decision to leave the generating market in the hands of the National Power-PowerGen duopoly is largely responsible for the near extinction of the coal industry. The decision to allow the RECs to sit on their local monopolies for eight years has produced some of the worst examples of profiteering and fat cattery yet witnessed.

With the break-up of the generators and competition in supply likely to mean a wave of consolidation among the RECs, the scope is there to reassemble the industry around a group of competing, vertically-integrated players. Second time around, Mr McCarthy has the chance to get it right.

Japan, Asia, then Russia. Who's next?

FINANCIAL MARKETS have been spooked by the financial crises in Japan and now Russia. Yesterday this widened to embrace virtually all the world's markets. What is happening? We answer the key questions.

Q. Why are world financial markets so jittery?

A. The shakiness of the financial systems of many less developed economies has been brought to the fore again by this week's turmoil in Russia. After blowing \$3.8bn (£2.3bn) of IMF money in a futile defence of the rouble, Russia's central bank chief, Sergei Dubinin, threw in the towel on Monday and announced what was effectively a substantial devaluation of the rouble. He also announced a 90-day moratorium on trading in short-term government debt.

Meanwhile, other countries in Asia are still mopping up the debris from the financial collapses that dominated last year.

Q. Which countries are most seriously affected?

A. In addition to Russia, there are crises in Korea, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia. Currencies as diverse as the South African rand, Indian rupee and

BY ANDREW GARFIELD
Financial Editor

Czech crown are under pressure, as are currencies and debt markets in emerging markets in Eastern Europe and Asia, joined significantly yesterday by Latin America. But the biggest worry is Japan, which is dragging its feet on much needed financial reform.

Q. Are these crises all linked?

A. Yes, they are all rooted in the bigger problem of a creaking Japanese economy, which in turn has slowed down other Asian economies and is now impacting the rest of the world. The problems in Russia have focused attention on the fragility of all emerging economies, which are now being shunned as investors move money away from risky territories.

Few of these economies have much in common by way of trade, except that all are having to use their weaker currencies to export their way out of trouble. That means they are effectively fighting each other to sell their goods to the US and Western Europe, which are the only parts of the global economy still growing at the moment.

There is also the vexed question of to what degree speculators such as George Soros and similar hedge funds are fanning the flames by "shorting" currencies to provoke devaluations from which they can profit. For instance, this week's crisis in Russia was at least aggravated, if not exactly caused, by the flight of capital worth \$4bn since May.

Q. So it is all the speculators' fault, then?

A. It is tempting to put the crises down to the globalisation of capital markets, which has resulted in larger pools of hot money flowing around the globe at the flick of a switch. There is some truth in the argument that the crises in some Asian countries, as in Mexico in 1992, were accompanied by a sudden reversal in sentiment among foreign investors.

However, the big foreign investors say that even if the crises are exacerbated by these flows, they would not happen if underlying economic fundamentals were sound. Most Asian states had unbalanced economies after decades of government-directed investment in heavy industry. Overcapacity tended to go hand in hand



Anxious Tokyo brokers take lunch at their desks yesterday as the world's financial markets looked like going into free fall

Reuters

with an underdeveloped banking system. Add corruption, cronyism and a lack of proper accounts and statistics, and you have a very unstable cocktail.

In Russia and South-east Asia much of the speculation was in fact domestically driven. As long as local currencies remained pegged to the dollar, it made sense for locals as well as foreigners to borrow in dollars to invest in high-yielding securities at home - until the peg breaks and hapless borrowers are left with assets suddenly worth less than liabilities.

The exception is Japan, in most respects a very advanced economy. Its problems, of a very

different order, predate the crisis and may take longer to solve.

Q. Does the Russian crisis matter?

A. Russia is the world's largest country, but far from the largest economy. Its stock market, even on a good day is worth less than, say, Tesco. There is very little real trade between Britain and Russia, and UK banks have generally avoided Russian lending.

However, Russia remains a very important power, and serious political instability could bode ill. There is a real fear that Russia could revert to a period of ultranationalist isolationism. Also the leading investment

banks, many with large emerging market teams in London, have committed heavily to Russia and are now looking at some very serious losses.

In a top-heavy financial system we are all dependent on investor confidence, which at the moment is very fragile.

Q. Will this tip the world into recession?

A. Much of the world already is effectively in recession. Consumption in Asia has plunged, and production aimed for there is going to the growth markets in Europe and the US.

The UK is labouring under a strong pound and much higher interest rates than its immediate rivals. Japan is stalled, and only France and Germany of

major OECD economies are forecast to grow faster this year than last. Even in the US, the dreaded 'R' word is heard. The big driver of the US economy has been technology, but prices of key parts have plummeted because of competition from Asia and the US trade balance has moved sharply into the red.

Q. What can the rest of the world do?

A. The IMF has committed \$40bn to tackle the crises, but Western donors are much less willing to stump up more. In most cases, we can do little more than leave the victims to pick up the pieces themselves.

IN BRIEF

Britax sells Autolease for £83m

BRITAX INTERNATIONAL has sold its UK vehicle leasing business, Autolease, to Standard Chartered for £83.2m cash. Britax chief executive, Richard Marton, welcomed the deal as the completion of its refocusing programme, saying: "Following this disposal and the sale of the Bristol Street dealerships last year, Britax's trading activities are now focused solely on international design-led manufacturing and marketing business."

Vision and Siemens in pact talks

VISION GROUP said it is negotiating an agreement with Siemens in which Vision and Siemens will jointly market Vision's CMOS image sensors on a worldwide basis.

Vision, which develops camera microchip products, said the agreement would cover a wide range of markets including desktop videoconferencing and digital still cameras.

Vision revealed in March that it was in discussions which included the possibility of an offer for the company. In yesterday's statement, Vision said the discussions with Siemens did not involve an offer for the company and added that no other such discussions were ongoing.

Eliza Tinsley bid for James Dickie

THE SPECIALIST engineering group, Eliza Tinsley, has made a recommended all-share bid for James Dickie, valuing the engineering firm at £14m. The offer values each James Dickie share at 155p, against its Thursday closing price of 128.5p.

Eliza Tinsley said it has been approached with acceptances by shareholders representing 26.6 per cent of the company. The offer is being made on the basis of 41 James Dickie shares for every 25 James Dickie shares, Eliza Tinsley said.

Profits up at Independent in SA

INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER Holdings Limited (INHL), the South African unit of Ireland's Independent Newspapers, yesterday reported a rise in interim pre-tax profits to R72m (£7m) from R62m in the same period in 1997. The company said that the recent weakening of the South African currency had created challenging trading conditions for the second half.

Rage shares rise on offer report

SHARES IN computer games and leisure group Rage Software rose as talk of a 20p per share offer from rival Eidos resurfaced. The stock gained 1p to 12.25p. Rage shares were worth 4.5p at the start of the year.

Buyers' strike lops £34bn off shares

EQUITIES WERE hammered as a multitude of worries, some old and some new, engulfed the stock market.

At one time Footsie crashed more than 200 points; it ended at 5,477, down 190.4, wiping nearly £34bn from stock market values.

Trading was not heavy and there was no wave of selling. "It's more a buyers' strike," said one trader.

Nevertheless, fears of a world slump were in the air. Suggestions that relatively healthy economies were about to be hit was one of the new influences. There was frightened talk of a round of devaluations as it appeared that the Asian infection was spreading to South America, with Venezuela said to be the first to be planning a cut in its exchange rate.

Russia's continuing difficulties also loomed large, with worries of a stock market meltdown. It added coals to the flames of unease by claiming its problems were even more formidable than it had thought, and pressure emerged for the resignation of President Yeltsin.

With the Far East deep in the doldrums, the global economic scene was suddenly looking decidedly grim. Japanese and other Asian shares are still in retreat, and with the German market weak on the country's banking links with Russia the clouds of gloom were almost impenetrable.

On top of the devaluation worries there were nagging fears about the possible repercussions of President Clinton's

bombing raids. And, just to pile on the agony, technical considerations arising from the monthly futures and options expiry weighed on prices.

It was all too much. London took fright from the opening bell. Before New York opened Footsie was more than 100 points off. When Wall Street staged a ragged retreat, with

TED BAKER, the clothing group placed at 135p a year ago, held at 127.5p. Earlier this month the shares were down to 119.5p; they have been above 180p.

Charterhouse's Tinsley expects October's interim profits to emerge at £1.5m and is shooting for a year's outcome up £1.64m to £2.7m, with £8m in the following year. Baker, it points out, is a "prodigious cash generator" and should have around £6m at the end of the year. It regards the shares as a buy.

Supporting shares also experienced devastation. The mid cap index slumped 84.5 points to 5,074.5 and the small cap crashed to a new low for the year, off 23.8 to 2,298.6. But government stocks provided one area of stability.

Only eight Footsie constituents managed to post gains. Prudential Corporation, up 24p to 845p led the rear-guard action. One influence was a new staff training scheme. Another was buy advice from Dresdner Kleinwort Benson and Lehman Brothers. The feeling that the Pru's days of independence are numbered was another factor. Consolidations in the insurance industry as in so many others, seem to be gathering pace: on Thursday two US groups announced an \$18bn merger.

The Pru is seen as a possible candidate to satisfy the ambitions of Lloyds TSB, known to be preparing to hit the acquisition trail. Halifax, said to be eyeing Norwich Union, added 2p to 706p and Woolwich also gained 2p to 336p.

The Dow Jones Average more than 200 points lower during London hours, the index followed, melting 212.3 at one time.

Footsie has suffered a week which, in points terms, produced its biggest ever closing gain since the turmoil of the 1987 crash, and yesterday its steepest post-crash fall. It started the week at 5,455, therefore managing a modest gain. The index opened the year at 5,135.5.

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Bankers Schroders headed the blue-chip rout, falling 132p to 1,348p. Diageo, the spirits group, was dumped 63p to 632p and engineer Siebe 20p to 226p.

Most analysts' buy suggestions had little impact. For example, Great Universal Stores was 6p firmer at 740p on Salomon Smith Barney support.

Boots, as BT Alex Brown trimmed its earnings per share forecast, fell 27p to 988p. Barratt Developments lost 5p to 203.5p as Pamure Gordon lowered its profit estimates for the industry.

Imperial Chemical Indus-

tries fell 26p to 660p. Charles Stanley downgraded its advice to hold. It expects profits of £404m this year.

Alders, the stores chain, held at 136p after buying in 8.5 million shares, representing 9.9 per cent of its capital, at 136p.

But retailer Essex Furniture fell 4p to a 27.5p low. Three years ago the shares were 281p. There are fears the company has been mauled badly in the retail recession. Last year the group made profits of £913,000.

Discount chain Brown & Jackson, the Poundstretcher operation, returned to profits,

making £7.5m against a £2.7m loss. The shares, after an early gain, were enveloped in the gloom, ending 1p down at 74p.

Engineer James Dickie hardened 9p to 137.5p as the long-mooted takeover bid - from engineer Eliza Tinsley - arrived. The share exchange offer values Dickie at £14m.

It was not a day for newcomers. Inter Link Foods almost hit 120p but had to settle for a tiny 0.5p premium at 110.5p.

SEAQ VOLUME: 762.2m
SEAQ TRADES: 66,159
GILTS INDEX: n/a

ADVERTISEMENT

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Agreements for loans made under The Education (Student Loans) Act 1990 (as amended) ("the Act") and the Education (Student Loans) (Northern Ireland) Order 1990 ("the Order") provide that the daily rate of interest will be varied each 1st September.

The Student Loans Company Limited HEREBY GIVES NOTICE that with effect from 1st September 1998 the RATE OF INTEREST under all such Loan Agreements is varied (in respect of the period from 1st September 1998) by being INCREASED from the present interest rate of 0.007039786% per day TO THE NEW INTEREST RATE of 0.009438570% per day (variable APR 3.5%).

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THE INDEPENDENT
Queen to lead Omagh service

THE INDEPENDENT
Saturday 22 August 1998

SPORT

How long will they waggle their backsides?

PAVEL JANUSZEWSKI lay prostrate on the track at the Nipstadion on Thursday night, having won the European Championship 400 metres hurdles title in a Polish record time. Not a bad performance from a man who had died the previous year.

That is, according to reports at the time in the Polish newspapers which were wrong in one very important respect.

As the trackside photographers, with their bids and bulky jackets, sensed their opportunity, the collapsed Pole was suddenly surrounded. His sky grew dark as they crowded over him. Then one broke away to get a shot from a low angle, leaning back on his elbow with a knee raised, like one of the figures in *Déjeuner sur l'herbe*.

Frantically, others followed suit,



MIKE ROWBOTTOM

breaking from their positions to take up this novel perspective. Whereupon the photographer who had originally broken ranks got up and started to take pictures of the men taking pictures.

It is one of the particular fascinations of watching athletics to see how each individual competitor behaves in the moment of triumph or adversity. Januszewski's reaction after crossing the line appeared to be out of the Charlie George school of flat-on-his-back celebration, but as his expression showed when he eventually found enough space to stand up, it was borne partly of exhaustion and partly from a sudden realisation of what he had done.

The Pole had taken nearly a second off his best time to earn a title he subsequently said he had never believed he could win - that is, until he held off the Russian favourite over the last hurdle.

Perhaps the most extreme example of this kind of reaction to success came in the thin air at the

Mexico Olympics of 1968, when Bob Beamon produced a long jump that was so far in advance of anything either he or any of his competitors had ever done - the record stood for 23 years - that he was completely overcome by his achievement, and suffered a cataleptic seizure.

For others, victory is simply sweet. Back in the late 70s Steve Overt's superiority over his rivals at 800 and 1500 metres allowed him to celebrate early. After moving clear of the mere mortals around the final bend, he would earn himself 80 metres of clear track in which to wave to the crowd or, if the mood took him, trace out the initial letters of a message to his girlfriend, Rachel.

The message was usually ILY - I Love You. But such was Overt's pre-eminence in those heady days

of British middle distance running that, in retrospect, he wasted many opportunities. There was time to deliver so many other greetings or instructions, had he only thought about it. PTKO, perhaps - Put The Kettle On - or even NORWICH.

Overt's cheek gave rise to a succession of imitations. His method was not without risk, however, as he discovered himself during one meeting at Crystal Palace when his premature celebrations were interrupted by the sudden appearance of a rival beating him to the line.

Perhaps the most savage satisfaction I have ever witnessed on an athletics track came at the 1992 Olympic Games, where Algeria's Hassiba Boulmerka became Hassiba Berserker after winning the 1500 metres title, smacking up a na-

tional flag and brandishing it at the watching world.

It was an act of vindication, rather than celebration, from a woman who had endured a prolonged campaign of criticism from extremist Muslims in her own country, who believed it was unseemly for females to take part in sporting competition.

But there doesn't have to be high drama for the process of watching finishers to be fascinating. It occurs in its most exquisite form with walkers, those exponents of what must surely be the world's most frustrating sport.

The fundamental rule - one or other foot to be in contact with the ground at all times - checks the fundamental instinct of wanting to hurry up. Competitive walkers are like men running in manacles.

But, as a result of this strange contradiction, there is always plenty of time to wonder, as the leading figures enter the stadium and begin the double circuit that winds them to the sanctuary of the line, how they will cope with the transformation back to normal, if wobbly, pedestrians.

Will they cross themselves? Before or after finishing? Will they wave their arms in the air? How long will they carry on wagging their backsides and swinging their arms before they come to a halt?

The spectacle has the same compulsion as train spotting. Or what I imagine to be the same compulsion as train spotting, as that is not something I have ever done.

However, you'll have to excuse me now. The 50 kilometres walkers are about to enter the stadium.

Rugby Union: New Zealand bottom of southern hemisphere heap as Tri-Nations reaches climax in Johannesburg today

All Blacks battle their dark age

BY CHRIS HEWITT

NOT EVEN the trendiest New Zealander would put his country at the cutting edge of popular culture; when the All Blacks decided to funkify their pre-Test ritual by adding a blast of rock to the familiar combination of national anthem and haka, they embarrassingly opted for a 30-year-old Rolling Stones standby first recorded when Colin Meads was still playing in the second row. But then, the Blacks are getting everything wrong these days. Four straight defeats, their bleakest sequence of results in 50 years, suggest they might have done better to forget the music and pick Mick Jagger and Charlie Watts at half-back instead.

This summer's Tri-Nations series reaches its climax in Johannesburg today and for the first time in the competition's brief history, New Zealand are an irrelevance. When the tournament began six short weeks ago, they had not dropped a home match to South Africa in 17 years and not lost anywhere to Australia, their most regular opponents, since 1994. Suddenly, they are bottom of the southern hemisphere heap and you can hear the sound of sides splitting from Stellenbosch to Sydney.

History tells us that New Zealand's sojourn amongst the deadbeats will be a strictly temporary affair and the only pertinent question is whether John Hart, their phenomenally gifted coach, can restore his charges to the straight and narrow in time for next year's World Cup. There are very few flies on Hart, a 20-20 visionary with an IQ to match, and for all his public insistence to the contrary, it began to dawn on him some time ago that his All Black machine was working on a faulty cycle.

Rugby's world order is governed, reasonably enough, by World Cup performances and ever since the All Blacks won the inaugural tournament in 1987, they have peaked at all the wrong moments. A wonderful side under Wayne Shelford in 1989, they were anything but wonderful under Gary Whetton when it really mattered two years later. They were brilliant, spectacularly so, in the 1995 competition, but trophies tend to be won by the ruthless and that ruthlessness would not emerge for another 12 months.

And now they are in the same boat once again, riding the downside of the wave when they should still be cruising towards the crest. They have lost four of the greatest players ever to lace up a boot in anger - Zinzan Brooke, Michael Jones, Frank Bunce and the incomparable Sean Fitzpatrick - and if, on the face of it, they have been unlucky in shedding a



All Black Jonah Lomu (centre) shows the strain as (left) Stefan Terblanche, Mark Andrews and Werner Swanpoel celebrate South Africa's dramatic win last Saturday. Allsport

quartet good enough to have held down a place in any side in any era, it is now clear that Hart gambled on their longevity and lost.

Brooke informed the All Black hierarchy a year ago that he would leave New Zealand after last autumn's tour of Britain and finish his playing days in London. Hart accepted his decision with extreme reluctance, figuring that the other three would keep body and soul together long enough to make 1999 a swansong to remember. Then came the hammer blows: Fitzpatrick's retirement through injury, Bunce's unexpected and inflammatory big-money move to French club rugby with Castres and Jones' wretched loss of form.

That deluge of misfortune and miscalculation has left Hart precisely one year to bring a brand new side to such a pitch of competitive expertise

that they can not only live with, but prevail over, the pace of the Wallabies, the sublime attacking genius of the French and the relentless physicality of the South Africans. It is a mighty big call, made a whole lot bigger by the fact that the new boys show little or no sign of stacking up.

Hart has already seen his first batch of potential replacements - Norm Hewitt, Todd Blackadder and Junior Tonga - fade to grey in the heat of battle. And the next generation? Anton Oliver has all of Fitzpatrick's edge but little of his class, Isitola Maka is formidable but lacking in subtlety and Carlos Spencer goes from God to God-awful in the space of a minute. Only Carl Hoeff, the young Otago loose

head, possesses the unmistakable stamp of a world-beater and props rarely win Test matches on their own.

If the national side fall in Wales in 12 months' time, the New Zealand public will use Hart's guts to tie up their rugby socks. Everything, but everything, has been sacrificed in pursuit of the world champion label: the All Blacks are no longer a team but a "brand", a cash rich product to be marketed and feted on the grandest of scales. What is more, all the available talent is being concentrated in the five Super 12 provinces from which the Test squad is drawn.

Given that once proud rural unions like Southland and Taranaki have been marginalised and emasculated and

that the National Provincial Championship, once the strongest of all domestic competitions, has been downgraded to allow the top performers a breather, the stakes are now very high indeed. In the act of putting every last egg in the All Black basket, the great and good of the New Zealand Rugby Football Union have already broken sufficient numbers to cause one hell of a stink in the event of a third successive World Cup misfire.

Earlier this week, a certain Zinzan Brooke said he might consider an international comeback, only to be slapped down by the voice of officialdom. "We're another year down the track since he retired," said Rob Fisher, the chairman of the beleaguered NZRFU. Thousands of uneasy New Zealand rugby folk might have added: "Yes. And another year down the slippery slope to nowhere."

ages of time. Pride and courage not quite enough, however.

1 August 1998, Christchurch: New Zealand 23 Australia 27. The nadir. Australia ran away with the match while the All Blacks can only distort the scoreline with two late tries. A thorough hiding.

15 August, 1998, Durban: South Africa 24 New Zealand 23. John Hart rings the changes and a youthful All Black outfit open up a 23-5 lead. Ironically, they are now without the experience to make it count.

FROM ALL-POWERFUL TO ALSO-RANS IN THE LAST 10 GAMES			
15 November, 1997, Dublin: Ireland 15 New Zealand 63. Deprived of Sean Fitzpatrick's leadership for the first time since 1995, the All Blacks concede early tries before pulling away.	6 December 1999, Twickenham: England 26 New Zealand 26. Tourists commit more unforced errors in 30 minutes than in previous four years combined, conceding 18 early points to a disbelieving England.	20 June, 1998, Dunedin: New Zealand 64 England 22. Ny and not until Danny Grewcock, the English lock, is sent off. The visitors' third-string outfit grab three late tries to finish the stronger.	27 June, 1998, Auckland: New Zealand 40 England 10. Obvious All Black deterioration as under-strength England hit the hour just 14-10 adrift. New boys fail to click.
22 November, 1997, Old Trafford: England 8 New Zealand 25. Fitzpatrick's absence in evidence again as the All Blacks fail to capitalise on a brilliant opening quarter, England far from outclassed.	29 November, 1997, Wembley: Wales 7 New Zealand 42. Jonah Lomu shows flashes of his old self as a poor Welsh side crumple beneath the swift towers. All Blacks win comfortably without being tested.	11 July, 1998, Perth: Australia 24 New Zealand 16. Matthew Burke's virtuosity gives the Wallabies a first victory in four years over their Tasman rivals. The ageing All Black pack fails to dominate.	15 August, 1998, Durban: South Africa 24 New Zealand 23. John Hart rings the changes and a youthful All Black outfit open up a 23-5 lead. Ironically, they are now without the experience to make it count.

THE FOUR IMPOSSIBLE TO REPLACE



Sean Fitzpatrick: Inspirational captain and hooker retired through injury



Zinzan Brooke: Back-row powerhouse moved to London to head the Harlequins



Frank Bunce: The ultimate centre took the money and ran to French club rugby



Michael Jones: The flying flanker never recovered fully from a terrible injury

Teichmann takes 'intellectual' approach to finale

BY MICHAEL FINCH

GARY TEICHMANN hopes to celebrate a record-equalling 29th appearance as Springbok captain today by beating Australia in the final Tri-Nations game at Ellis Park, Johannesburg.

The 28-year-old will equal Francois Pienaar's record for the number of appearances as

captain at the ground where Pienaar made history three years ago, when South Africa upset New Zealand to win the World Cup. It will be the first time Australia have played at the ground since losing there in 1969 and they face a Springbok unbeaten in this year's competition.

While South Africa are

favourites to win the match and the Tri-Nations trophy, the Springbok coach, Nick Mallett, is cautious: "If you look at our results this year we've probably been the luckiest team in the competition," Mallett said. "I could be in the same position as [New Zealand coach] John Hart, having played quite competitively but with three losses."

South Africa edged out Australia 14-13 in their first match, beat the All Blacks 13-3 in their second and then managed a stirring late comeback to edge past New Zealand 24-23.

"In many ways, Australia are playing the kind of rugby that I would like to see our guys play," Mallett said. "There's not many weaknesses and they

believe in their ability to maintain possession."

South Africa's game plan will centre around their scrum-half, Joost van der Westhuizen, whose try against New Zealand last week signalled the comeback from 23-5 down.

"I think the team that plays the most intellectual game will win," Teichmann said. "It's a

matter of thinking on your feet and keeping the ball in hand."

The Australia coach, Rod MacQueen, believes the difference will be simpler than that: "It will be the team that does the basics the best that will win."

With Stephen Larkham now in his natural stand-off position, Australia's talented backs should be the biggest headache

for the South African defence, although Larkham's opposite number, Henry Honiball, has been singled out by the Australians as a real threat.

South Africa: Montgomery, Terblanche, Strydom, Muller, Rossouw, Hombart, van der Westhuizen, Kewes, Dutton, Garvey, Otto, Andrews, Erasmus, Venter, Teichmann (capt).

Australia: Burke, Tane, Herbert, Horan, Hewitt, Larkham, Gregan, Crowling, Kearns, Blakes, Bowman, Eales (capt), Cockburn, Wilson, Kela.

Lewis powers ahead of rivals

MIKE ROWBOTTOM
in Budapest

DENISE LEWIS is more than half-way towards winning her second major heptathlon title following an outstanding performance on the first day of her competition here at the European Championships.

The woman who has added Olympic bronze and world silver to her collection since making her breakthrough by winning the 1994 Commonwealth title lies second in the overall standings overnight, with 3,842 from the first four of her seven events, just 28 points behind Natalya Sazanovich of Belarus, who overtook the Briton in winning the last of the 200 metres races in 23.62sec, a race in which Lewis recorded 24.75. Ursula Włodarczyk, of Poland is third, with 3,815.

The omens for the 25-year-old Birchfield Harrier look particularly good as the second day - long jump, javelin and 800 metres - is traditionally her strongest, although Sazanovich and Włodarczyk also have reasonable second-day events to call upon. At this stage in the 1996 Olympics, she was sixth, and at last year's World Championships, fourth.

What made the big difference to Lewis yesterday was her performance in the third event, the shot put, where she raised her personal best for the third time this season to record a winning effort of 15.27 metres, a massive improvement of 55 centimetres on the mark she set earlier this month at the Welsh Games.

That followed a 100 metres hurdles of 13.59sec, and a high jump in which she reached 1.83 metres, just 1cm beneath her personal best.

Lewis's joy at her achievement in the shot, which came with her first attempt, was palpable, as she turned to the British supporters and shook her fist in the air. It was a significant blow to the morale of Sabine Braun, Germany's defending champion, who, like Lewis, has been struggling to overcome injury this season and was forced to drop out of the Goodwill Games last month without completing seven events.

Lewis, who has been troubled with an ankle injury for three months, was cautious about her prospects coming into these Championships, viewing it as, effectively, the survival of the fittest. But she rediscovered her competitive edge yesterday.

Grit Breuer, of Germany, won the women's 400 metres time in 49.93sec. The pace was too much for Britain's pair, Al-

lison Curbishley and Donna Fraser, who were fifth and sixth respectively in 51.05 and 51.54.

Earlier in the day, Colin Jackson and Tony Jarrett progressed as heat winners to today's 110m hurdles semi-finals.

Jarrett, who fell at the last hurdle in his last competition at the Zurich Grand Prix, had to endure a nervous time as he incurred one of three false starts before finishing clear of the field in a time of 13.51sec.

Jackson, whose only problem was the last hurdle, which he hit, won impressively in 13.31sec, easing down, ahead of one of the Germans expected to offer one of his main challenges, Florian Schwarhoff, who recorded 13.64. Falk Balzer, the fastest German in the current rankings, won his heat in 13.47.

It was a promising start for Jackson, who made an unexpected return to form at last year's World Championships, where he took silver behind Allen Johnson of the United States, and he has progressed further this year after having a successful operation on his knee and linking up once more with his old coach, Malcolm Arnold, at Bath University.

His times this year are better than they have been since 1993, when he set the current world record of 12.91sec in winning the world title at Stuttgart, and he leads the European rankings with his time of 13.07sec.

Jackson is taking these championships seriously - he missed the Golden League meetings at Monaco and Zurich in order to concentrate on his preparations. "The European Championships is something that has always been a big thing to win for me," said the man who already won two titles.

"Running more races against the US hurdlers would detract from my concentration for the main event." His hopes are high. "I will be a little disappointed if I don't duck under 13 seconds this weekend," he said. "If I am in good shape I will do all I need to win - and that will probably take me under 13 seconds."

He identified the Germans, and Robin Korfing of the Netherlands, as his main threats.

Lorraine Shaw and Lyn Sprules both reached today's hammer final, with qualifying efforts of 61.11 and 60.64 metres respectively, but Katharine Merry, trained by Linford Christie, found the pace too fast to reach the 200 metres



Colin Jackson is framed by hurdles on the starting blocks for his heat in the 110m event, which the Briton won in 13.31sec

Reuters

Edwards aims to secure last reward

BY STEVEN DOWNES

JONATHAN EDWARDS, the triple jump world record holder, has admitted that today's final will be his last chance for European glory.

"I will compete up to the Sydney Olympics in 2000 and maybe just one year after that,"

Edwards, the 1995 world champion, said, "but I'm not getting any younger and I've got to start thinking about my career after athletics."

Considering that the next European championships are in 2002, Edwards must win this weekend to finish his career with any reward for being

Europe's leading triple-jumper for the past six years.

"Ultimately, my career will be judged on the titles that I've won," Edwards said. "I don't feel I've done particularly badly at championships, but of course I want to win something here."

Edwards denied that he no longer feels the pressure of being the

cause of concern over an injury.

"I always stay at home as long as I can. You don't want to stay in a hotel room for two days more than you really need to."

"I've got no injury problems at all," he added. "There isn't even a doubt in my mind."

Edwards said he no longer feels the pressure of being the

favourite for gold. "I'm expected to win every time and jump close to the world record every time I compete. I've read the same things as I did in 1996 - that it would be a sensation if I were to lose - and I've thought, 'Yes, it would be. But it hasn't bothered me this time, it's like water off a duck's back.'"

RESULTS FROM BUDAPEST

MEN

200M
Semi-finals: Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 20.81; 2. T. Douglas (New) 20.85; 3. P. Richardson (GB) 20.86; 4. C. Cheval (Fr) 20.87.
Heat 2: 1. D. Walker (GB) 20.74; 2. T. Turner (GB) 20.89; 3. R. Norrish (Fr) 21.00; 4. G. Moon (Nor) 21.01.

800M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. B. Korfing (Ger) 1:52.32; 2. A. L. (GB) 1:52.32; 3. A. L. (GB) 1:52.32; 4. A. L. (GB) 1:52.32.
Heat 2: 1. J. McKoy (Ir) 1:46.81; 2. G. T. (GB) 1:46.81.

110M HURDLES
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. C. Jackson (GB) 13.31; 2. F. Schwarhoff (Ger) 13.64; 3. P. Philibert (Fr) 13.78; 4. T. Jarrett (GB) 13.51; 5. D. Balzer (Ger) 13.64; 6. F. Balzer (Ger) 13.64; 7. F. Balzer (Ger) 13.64; 8. F. Balzer (Ger) 13.64.

400M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00.

100M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 10.00.

200M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 20.00.

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800M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 2. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 3. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 4. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 5. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 6. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 7. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 8. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32.

110M HURDLES
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. C. Jackson (GB) 13.31; 2. F. Schwarhoff (Ger) 13.64; 3. P. Philibert (Fr) 13.78; 4. T. Jarrett (GB) 13.51; 5. D. Balzer (Ger) 13.64; 6. F. Balzer (Ger) 13.64; 7. F. Balzer (Ger) 13.64; 8. F. Balzer (Ger) 13.64.

400M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 1:00.00.

100M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 10.00.

200M
First round: (Qualifiers for semi-finals)
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 20.00.

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13.78. Heat 4: 1. T. Jarrett (GB) 13.51; 2. R. Norrish (Fr) 13.61; 3. S. D. Balzer (Ger) 13.62; 4. S. D. Balzer (Ger) 13.62.

500M WALK
Heat 1: 1. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 2. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 3. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 4. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 5. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 6. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 7. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36; 8. M. Richardson (Pol) 1:48.36.

100M
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 10.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 10.00.

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Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 2. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 3. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 4. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 5. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 6. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 7. G. B. (GB) 20.00; 8. G. B. (GB) 20.00.

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800M
Heat 1: 1. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 2. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 3. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 4. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 5. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 6. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 7. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32; 8. G. B. (GB) 1:52.32.

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Colin Montgomerie looks dejected after missing one of many putts at the K Club yesterday

Ailsport

"It's a good feeling to go out there and know that the confidence from last week is so high that I could just let it go," Singh said. "I don't worry about the bad shots. I just think about where I'm going to hit the ball. The feeling is good, and you've got to ride it while you can."

Carter, 37, who has yet to win an event in seven full seasons on the Tour, had nine birdies and also finished at 15.

Woods, playing this course for the first time, started on No. 10 and gained his first eagle at the par-four 13th. He added five more points at the par-five eighth hole.

an extra effort against an opponent who surprised everyone by reaching the Wimbledon quarter-finals this year.

"I was really satisfied to get

"I felt very flat today," Sampas after his loss to a player ranked 98 places below him. "I give him credit, he played well. But I wasn't the player I usually am out there. You can't afford to be flat in this league. Maybe, playing three weeks in a row took its toll."

Raoux halted the second-seeded Australian's winning streak at 11 with a solid performance from beginning to end. Rafter, who was playing for the fourth consecutive week, said he will spend a few days on the beach in Bermuda before resuming preparation for his defence of the US Open title later this month.

After a bright opening five minutes, England allowed Argentina to dictate the game for long periods and it was no surprise when they took the lead in the 15th minute. Juan Hourquebie, finding himself unmarked, scored from Pablo Lombi's free hit.

As England struggled to get back into the game they wasted three penalty corners before Ben Sharpe scored the first of his two goals in the 29th minute.

The break for England came in the 69th minute, Russell Garcia scoring on the slip at a penalty corner for the equaliser. Within 11 seconds England were leading. Garcia from the

The teams meet again today at Bisham Abbey at 3pm.

ENGLAND: J Lewis (Cannock); S Gerard (Redditch); J Wignall (Reading); S Waseley (Southampton, capt); S Forthman (Hounslow); B Gerda (Harvestehude Nambur); J Fildench (Cannock); J Wills (Redditch); S Sharpe (Cannock); M Pears (Reading); S Head (East Grinstead). Substitutes: coach; D Hall (Gulnfold); D Wills (Southgate); M Johnson (Cannock).

ARGENTINA: M Ronconi; A Cazzelli; C Retregui (capt); M Pellegrino; G Orsucci; T Mac Cormac; M Caldes; D Chiodo; F Morelli; P Lombi; S Capurro. Substitutes: J Houqueble; L Melgaroso.

Uruguay: E Saldaña (Argentina) and S Brooks (England).

"I'm just not enjoying the game anymore and I've always said that when that happens I'll call it a day. I will carry on until the end of the season and the aim is to go out at the World Championship in Sheffield.
"I haven't been back there to

However, he will for ever be associated with his match against Steve Davis in the following year's world final. Training 8-0, Taylor appeared to be heading towards a heavy defeat but he clawed his way back into contention and, at 12.19am in front of a record 18.5m BBC2 viewers, he sank the black in the deciding frame to win 18-17.

Taylor added: "People still ask me about the final black and the finger-wagging. I don't think a day goes by when it doesn't crop up in conversation with somebody. I hope it continues for a long time."

In recent years, though, Taylor has found winning form progressively more difficult to achieve. He has lost his last eight matches in pro-events and last season slipped from 34th to 52nd in the world rankings.

Taylor, the oldest player among the top 100, said: "I have a fairly full diary away from the table and it costs me money to set days aside to play in the qualifiers."

The most incisive coverage of the weekend's Premiership matches plus a full results and statistics service



England v Australia

WORCESTER (Day 1 of 4): England have scored 179 for 4 wickets against Australia

England now lead:

ENGLAND — First innings

	Runs	6s	4s	Bs	M's
C Edwards & Raton b Fitzpatrick	12	0	1	0	70
J Britton not out	68	0	3	17	24
B Doolittle b Franklin	31	0	4	10	9
K Smithies & Foley	11	0	2	39	9
A Jones & J. Franklin	11	0	2	39	9
GJ Caesar not out	27	0	3	99	5
Extras (lb 4 lb 6 w)	179				
Total (for 4, 168 overs)	179				
Hits 1-25, 2-39, 3-102, 4-121.					
Bowler's Record: M. Reavyard, S. Cullyer, C. Taylor, I. Peterson					
Catches: C Fitzpatrick 28-6-62-1, K Raton 26-12-26-6					
Bowling 18-10-22-1, O Morgan 11-2-21-0, A Foley 19-24-1, A Franklin 5-1.					
Umpires: A Foran & J Wasey.					

Today's fixtures

BRITISH AIRCRAFT ASSURANCE CHAMPIONSHIP (Third day of two)

Yesterday, only Marcus Trescothick looked to have the spirit to nurse Somerset towards distant victory but, like most of the batters in this game, he eventually succumbed to a silly swish. By lunchtime, naughty-boy practice nets had been erected on the outfield.

Today's fixtures

BY CLIVE WHITE AND NICK HARRIS

AS YOU WERE

A high-contrast, black and white portrait of a man, likely a football player, wearing a polo shirt. The shirt features the 'UMBRO' brand name on the left chest and a circular crest on the right chest. The man has a serious expression and is looking slightly to the side. The image is framed by a thick black border.

Stamford Bridge squad player in 1996/7, he found himself as the player-manager manager on Rudd Gullit's departure this spring. He has since led the Blues to a League Cup and a European Cup-Winners' Cup, not to mention the purchase of £34m of new players. Perhaps that's why he has lost all his hair (above).

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

WILD CARD EXTRAS
Emile Hesley will score the first goal in the Leicester v Everton match too (£1 at 11-2. Tote). As insurance against this week's Desmond fall (unlikely, but possible), betting on Millie Hughes scoring the first goal in a win for Southampton (25p on the permutation at 125-1, William Hill) or 4-0 win (25p at 275-1, Corais) is likely to help matters, but what the hell.
ORIGINAL BANK: £100.
CURRENT KITTY: £94.28.
TOTAL WAGERED TODAY: £7.75 (including 59p tax paid on).

ON THE BOARD

Name: Greg Dyke.
Position: Non-executive director of Manchester United plc.
Form: Ex-head of TV-am and London Weekend Television. Chairman of Channel 5 and chairman and chief executive of Pearson Television.
Big Ideas: His major successes to date include bringing *Roland Rat* - TV-am's saviour - and *Blind Date* to television. As a consultant at United, his main task will be ensuring MUTV is as classy as a flourish any European super league make a local



IN T'NET

Found on the Web: Wimbledon fans' hopes and fears
WILD HOPES: "That Ronaldo will get knocked out after running past all the players on the pitch during a top game and suddenly have a desire to put on a Wimbledon shirt."
HOPES: "That no one laughs at me again when I tell them that I support Wimbledon all the way."
FEARS: "That we end up in either Dublin or Selhurst Park permanently."
WILD FEARS: "We get relegated from the Third Division and are not allowed in the Conference as we have to re-use Plough Lane as it stands at present."
<http://www.netknect.co.uk/b/brenford/wimbledon/>

MY TEAM



ALEX SALMOND

HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN

The leader of the Scottish National Party "I entered the world on Hogmanay 1964 and to celebrate my birth, my Dad went to the following day's Ne'erday match. Hearts won, and from that day forward there was only one team I was ever going to support. The current squad are as exciting a group as I have seen in a very long time. For years Hearts were a team that came close but never quite delivered. After the Scottish Cup win last year all that has changed – the key now is turning winning into a habit, and from moving from a runner-up spot to pole position. In that regard at least, there is a similarity between my team and my Party."

SEEN BUT NOT BOUGHT

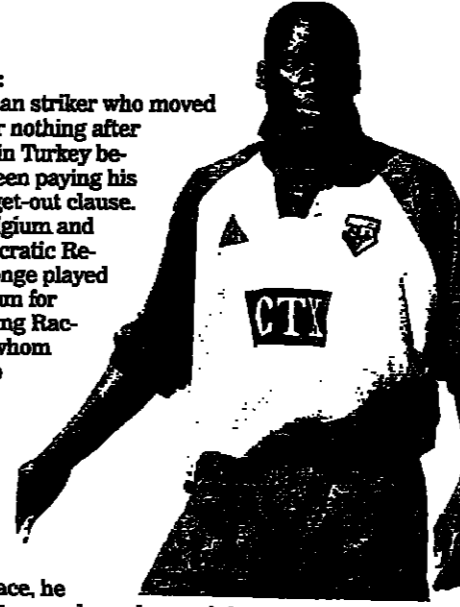
THE EXTREMELY useful "Fan in a Can", from the Aston Villa gift shop, is as remarkable as it is beautiful. The "fan" - a small rag doll in a Villa kit - will amuse babies and small children, while the can - a tin in Villa's colours - cunningly doubles as a money box. At £14.99, the ensemble is as competitively priced as Dwight Yorke, and as useful as the Villa self-inflating seat cushion (£7.99) and the Villa Mug & Sock Set (£6.99). Hurry now while stocks last. Or alternatively don't.

WHO ATE ALL THE PIES?

THE PREMIUM food at Chelsea, like the premium season tickets, is "ambitiously" priced. Faggots, peas and mash in the Shed Bar costs £6, while fish, chips and mushy peas in Fish-nets restaurant will set you back £10. Do not despair, though – the traditional footy fare of arctichoke and asparagus gateau with slow-roasted tomatoes, parsleyed potatoes and a warm herb dressing can still be had at the Chelsea Village Hotel – for only £15 plus 12.5% service.

THEY'RE NOT ALL DENNIS BERGKAMP

Unsung foreign legionnaires No 2
MICHEL NGONGE:
The 31-year old Zaïrean striker who moved to Watford in June for nothing after leaving Samsunspor in Turkey because they had not been paying his wages and he had a get-out clause. A dual national of Belgium and Zaïre (now the Democratic Republic of Congo), Ngonge played club football in Belgium for five sides, the last being Racing Club Harelbeke, whom he left in 1996 to go to Samsunspor. Has played 11 times for Zaïre, scoring four goals. Was bought by Graham Taylor on video evidence alone and has signed a three-year deal. Known for his pace, he used to run 100m in 11 seconds, and scored the winning goal against Bradford last week.



WEEKEND FIXTURE GUIDE

[illegible]

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

As soon as that match was over we gave them the good news that we wanted to sign one of their best players and they responded by saying, 'yes, if you pay us a king's ransom you can take him.' So we paid the king's ransom. Blackburn manager Roy Hodgson after signing £5.5m Christian Dailly from Derby.

Naz might have a Ferrari and a Lamborghini but I've got two whippets and a ferret. They're more important in this area. Scarborough boxer Paul Ingle on why he is more of a type than possible future opponent Naseem Hamed.

هاتفنا من الداخل

A love of mangled syllables and tortured vowels

THE PROBLEM with sports impressionists, I find, is that though they generally pin down their subjects pretty well, their scripts are usually about as funny as a skin complaint. Once or twice I've had to switch over rather than watch the truly excruciating Kevin Connolly, for example. So it was with a heavy heart that I sat down to watch last night's *Alistair McGowan's Football Backchat* (C4).

The programme bucked the trend by being funny in parts - a cruel take on Stan Collymore, for example, when asked about the difference between the atmosphere at Liverpool and Aston Villa: "It's really similar," McGowan has him saying, "it's like about 70 per cent nitrogen and 20 per cent oxygen and eight per cent carbon dioxide. It's all I've had all my life really." (It's a bit of an old standby, though, the

CHRIS MAUME

SPORT ON TV



one about thick footballers.) And there's a nice conversation on the training ground between Paul Ince and David Beckham. The Guv'nor asks, "What's Posh Spice like then?" and Beckham replies, "She is posh, like, she don't just say, 'take us from behind' she'll say, 'take me from behind, please'."

McGowan's slack-mouthed Beckham impersonation is brilliant - indeed, some of his impressions are so good, the quality of the

script hardly matters. The acme of his repertoire is Trevor Brooking. I savoured every mangled syllable, every tortured vowel and crushed consonant, the way his sentences fall off into sounds hitherto unheard by man or beast. He could have read *Exchange & Mart à la Brooking* and still cracked me up.

There was a bit of a dated feel to the programme, though, explained by the fact that it's been available on video since last year. So there's much use made not only of England's Far East tour before the last European Championship, but even of footage from the *Cutting Edge* Graham Taylor documentary. Do I not like that, one might say. Eric Cantona's a bit *vieux chapeau* as well, *nest-ce pas*? Surely the thing to do was commission a new programme based on the World Cup rather than

raiding the local video store. McGowan must surely be slightly embarrassed about having such old stuff put out during Friday's post-pub prime time.

There was something of a breach of the Trades Descriptions Act over on the BBC too this week. Monday's *Match of the Day Special* was billed as reviewing the weekend's action - which meant the goals from Saturday. As Ray Stubbs put it in the course of one of those over-extended metaphors so beloved of sports anchormen, they had been "contractually red-carded" from showing a single second of the games on Sunday and Monday. What's going on? I suspect one or two suits at Sky are coming over all starchy, but their counterparts at Television Centre really should get it sorted.

The main problem with *Match*

of the Day Special, though, (apart from having no match of the day, special or otherwise) is the BBC's usual fault of trying to pack too much in. The treatment given to such items as the putative European super league were so perfunctory as to be worse than useless, taking up space that would have been better used for treating a couple of subjects in depth (and super league debates were going on a couple of weeks ago, but have abated for the moment, so it was off the pace even to bother).

One welcome innovation (innovation for the BBC, that is) was to get a journalist on (though one should be the limit - witness the sometimes gruesome spectacle of backs chewing the fat on Sky's *Hold The Back Page*). Not surprisingly, Patrick Barclay of the *Sunday Telegraph* made the most articu-

late contributions, particularly in an extended discussion (i.e. at least two or three minutes) on Glenn Hoddle's drop-Gazza-and-tell story.

Barclay came out in defence of the England manager. "It's not exceptionally revealing," he said. "There are no real secrets." Besides which, he rightly pointed out, Gascoigne's own version appeared two days after the incident. And anyway, as Barclay said, "It's a public game, and we're not talking about the sanctity of the confessional box, we're not talking about the War Cabinet, we're talking about a football team." That wouldn't have gone down well with Bill Shankly. For all Barclay's measured persuasiveness, however, and though Harry Redknapp agreed with him, it was difficult not to side with Mark Lawrenson's

purist approach. "The England manager should be above it all," he said.

In a half-hour programme, the worst waste of space was an item presumably intended to be a jolly. Picking up on the suggestion made by the Crystal Palace chairman, Mark Goldberg (presumably as a joke) that players have tracking chips inserted in their ears, there were numerous imaginative ways this flimsy topic could have been dealt with, but surely, surely, not a single one of them involved an interview with Peter Reid, the Sunderland manager - a good bloke, clearly, but no Jerry Seinfeld, not even a Tommy Docherty. To see Stubbs trying to extract witticisms from Weirside's Mr Happy was embarrassing. Perhaps they should have got Alistair McGowan to do him instead.

Bull keeping up with new generation

WITHIN THE lineage of great Molineux strikers, Robbie Keane will surely net Wolves their greatest modern-day prize, either through promotion to the Premiership or a multi-million pound transfer. But the teenage Republic of Ireland international still has some way to go to match record marksman Steve Bull or 1970s hero John Richards in Black Country hearts. In the meantime, old gold and black goalscorers past, present and future are melding promisingly for the First Division club.

Richards, these days the club's managing director, may ultimately have a casting vote in deciding when Bull's number is up and when - if - the numbers add up to sell Keane. But on Tuesday night Richards was at Molineux, simply delighted to witness his 18th League Cup scoring record equalled as Bull plundered his 18th hat-trick. For good measure, Keane scored the other two as Barnet were well and truly routed.

"I thought Bull was outstanding. He's actually had a very good start to the season and is looking as sharp as he has done for a year or two," purred Richards, who first joined Wolves 30 years ago and bagged six hat-tricks amongst his 194 goals. "Now I'm looking forward to him breaking the record."

"Records are there to be broken. I'm here at Wolves as a director and as a supporter. I want to see goals in the back of the net and there's nothing better than seeing Steve score them. My heart's at Molineux and always will be and seeing Bull notch hat-tricks is great for the supporters."

Wolves' record scorer has found a fresh spur thanks to Molineux's influx of striking talent. By Peter Lansley

Steve, coming towards the end of his career, to have a season in the Premiership."

The next morning, Richards was on a plane to Rotterdam to convince David Connolly, Keane's international colleague, to join Wolves on loan from Feyenoord until the end of the season. But the way Wolves and Bull, four goals in four games, have started, the new boy's best hope today is a place on the substitutes' bench for the visit from fragile Swindon. Victory would give Wolves their best start for 29 years.

Bull has fine-tuned his lifestyle to keep up with the Keanes and Connollys of this world and Richards, whose own playing career at Molineux ended acrimoniously in 1983 amid rows with his erstwhile striking partner, Derek Dougan, who had taken control of the ailing club, sees no reason why a 38-year-old has to consider retiring just yet.

"Bully has always been a quick healer and now he's got someone like Robbie Keane alongside him, that will take some of the pressure off him as four strikers recently to give Bull and Keane their head and landing long-term target Connolly does not signal Bull's demise. "He is the quality of player who will keep the pressure on these two," said McGhee. "He comes initially to try to displace them, or to get in the team alongside them."

"Bull's at the wrong end of the age scale," admitted the manager. "But he's done things to his lifestyle, and in his training and preparation. He knows he's got to keep fitter and sharper to keep up with the likes of

defenders are having to look at Robbie as well as Steve now," Richards said. "There's a lot more movement, a lot more variety, about the way the team plays now instead of the ball over the top which was Steve's trademark. He's now added a bit more to his game, coming short and linking up with the midfield. It's paying off."

Pounding the Staffordshire pavements in a summer search for extra fitness has boosted Bull, who broke Billy Hartill's 60-year-old club record of 16 hat-tricks at Grimsby two years ago. "In my mind and body, I feel as fit as Robbie Keane and he's 18," said Bull, who signed from West Bromwich Albion for £24,000 in 1986. "I did actually think in the summer, with [Steve] Claridge, [Dougie] Freedman and the rest here, do they want me any more? Maybe I've done my job and it's time for me to get out of the way."

"I sat down with my wife and we decided to dig in, work hard and see how it goes. I've done more pre-season this year, running round the streets every day doing so many miles, and I'm fitter for it."

Mark McGhee, the Wolves manager, has sold Bull and Keane their head and landing long-term target Connolly does not signal Bull's demise. "He is the quality of player who will keep the pressure on these two," said McGhee. "He comes initially to try to displace them, or to get in the team alongside them."

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I'm a serious Steve Bull these days, I get my head down... but stop calling me an old warhorse

Keane. Even if we were to spend £500,000, £1 million or £2m on a player and he never plays a game because of the form of Bull and Keane, we'll be happy."

Bull, 304 Wolves goals under his belt, added: "I've seen strikers come and go here - another two or three won't bother me."

"I'm a serious Steve Bull these days, I get my head down, and if I'm looking after number one, they've got to take the shirt off me. But will you stop calling me an old warhorse, or a wily veteran? I feel young again and I'm still learning the game, whether I'm 33 or 23."

"Me and Robbie are starting to get a bit of a combination going now. I've said to him recently, if you work hard, the goals will come. It's taken a bit of time to sink in, but if he can keep his feet on the ground and listen, he'll go a long way."

"It's always been about

"Steve Bull should score 25-odd goals a season" here at Wolves but now we're all starting to chip in and that's taken a load off my shoulders. I watched Fulham the other night and if Peter Beardsley is still doing it at 37, then there's no reason why Steve Bull can't."

The players are concerned that last year's Premier Division championship bonus was not agreed until November 1997 and wish to conclude the arrangements for this season at an earlier stage.

"Bonus payments at the club are not uniform and depend on the terms of individual contracts. This has led to the situation where, of two substitutes who did not play, one received a bonus and the other did not. The players consider themselves to be a squad and anxiously seek uniformity in these matters."

Celtic's first-team squad insist they have not given up their charity work throughout the dispute.

"The players have continued throughout this difficult time to carry out a variety of charity appearances," the statement added. The players themselves decided to donate their bonus of £230,000 to charity.

The champions play Dundee United in the Premier League at Parkhead today.

'Work to rule' at Celtic is over

SCOTTISH LEAGUE

CELTIC'S FIRST-TEAM squad have agreed to end their "work to rule" with immediate effect, despite accusing the club's managing director, Fergus McCann, of "having no respect" for their achievements.

The players have adopted a stance of non-cooperation with their club and the media following a row over bonus payments in the Champions' League.

Tony Higgins, secretary of the Scottish Professional Footballers' Association, intervened in an attempt to try to find a solution, but the players are bitter at the way they have been treated by the management and say they have dragged their feet over bonuses.

The first-team squad issued a statement following a meeting with Higgins yesterday. It read: "The first-team squad have decided to comply with the terms of their contracts with immediate effect. The players' decision reflects their determination to find a solution to the current dispute with the club by means of discussion."

Tony Higgins of the players union will meet with the club management to put forward the views of the players and to discuss matters of industrial relations within the club.

"The players have attempted over six months to resolve by discussion with the club various matters including the question of club bonuses for both domestic and European competitions."

"The current dispute has arisen from the failure of the club to resolve these matters and was brought to a head by the recent issue of bonus for the Champions' League."

The players are angered that their bonuses are not on the same scale as those of their Old Firm rivals, Rangers. They also believe there are anomalies in the way the bonus system has been structured by the management.

The statement continued: "For many years the club have compared the players' achievements with those of Glasgow Rangers and assured players that similar success would be rewarded by comparable bonuses. Comparing the bonus on offer with bonuses paid outside Scotland was a departure from the club's previous position."

"The players are concerned that last year's Premier Division championship bonus was not agreed until November 1997 and wish to conclude the arrangements for this season at an earlier stage."

"Bonus payments at the club are not uniform and depend on the terms of individual contracts. This has led to the situation where, of two substitutes who did not play, one received a bonus and the other did not. The players consider themselves to be a squad and anxiously seek uniformity in these matters."

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Russell steps into the light Bruce facing difficult test from past master

NATIONWIDE LEAGUE

CRAIG RUSSELL makes an emotional return to Sunderland today as Tranmere face up to injury crisis, with their defensive duo, George Santos and Clint Hill, both suspended and Dave Challinor ruled out with a knee injury.

"It would be fantastic to get the chance to play at the Stadium of Light," said the on-loan Russell. "I grew up supporting Sunderland and will always follow them, and I want to remind people I am still around."

Russell's former team-mate, Michael Bridges, is missing through suspected appendicitis. The Striker Niall Quinn could be fit again following a back injury, but the leading goalscorer, Kevin Phillips faces a late fitness test on a knee injury.

Matt Jansen is hoping to celebrate his new six-year contract at Crystal Palace with

3-2 win over Plymouth Argyle and urged them to lift their standards for their return to League action today against visitors Ipswich.

"We defended well enough against Tranmere last weekend and I don't think there's any need for us to hit the panic button," Whitbread said. "We've found one or two areas where we can improve and we'll be looking to put that into practice this weekend."

Ipswich expect to field an unchanged side from the one which crushed Exeter 5-1 in the Worthington Cup for the game at Fratton Park, where they have not lost since 1968.

The Queens Park Rangers manager, Ray Harford, believes his side can get their season moving at Norwich after picking up just one point and one goal from their opening two league matches against Sunderland and Bristol City.

"We've had an extremely

difficult start to the season but team spirit is really high and the players are working very hard," Harford said. "Hopefully all we need is a bit of luck in front of goal. If we get one then a lot more will follow."

Bruce Riach, the Norwich manager, may give a debut to on-loan Ged Brannan from Manchester City as he returns to the club which sacked him, along with Stewart Houston, last season.

Meanwhile, the Bury manager, Neil Warnock, will be hoping his side can keep up the momentum of four unbeaten matches for Crewe Alexandra's visit to Gigg Lane.

Grimsby will give their record signing, Lee Ashcroft, his home debut for the visit of Huddersfield, while Port Vale can lift themselves off the foot of the table with a win over West Bromwich at Vale Park and Watford travel to fellow promoted club Bristol City.

The decision to leave St Andrew's this summer to take over the Blades was not one of the hardest he has had to make, but it was still the end of another chapter in his long and illustrious career.

Now, just two weeks into the new season, the fixtures computer has thrown Bruce into the spotlight against a Birmingham side which he once captained and with whom

he spent two seasons after his heady days playing for Manchester United.

While many managers admit to having learnt from previous bosses along the road to taking charge themselves, Bruce has quickly discovered that it often counts for nothing and that you have to make your own decisions.

"You pick up little things from every individual. But ultimately it's your way. It's how you do it and that's what you live and die by," Bruce admitted. "I've only been in this game six weeks and I already know that that's how this business is."

"So how am I different? It's in different situations you face. Some people would pick other players for instance. Everybody will have an opinion on who they think should be in the

team. Now, ultimately, I know it's my decision and I will pick the team accordingly."

"I also bring my own qualities into management. In particular I've always wanted to achieve and wanted to win, and hopefully I'll drag everybody along there with me. I want to go and play in the Premiership. I want to be involved again in the big games and playing in the nice stadiums."

"If I didn't think Sheffield United were prepared to do that then I'd be wasting my time here."

Birmingham, however, are one of the teams barring his way to achieving that ambition, as Bruce firmly believes that Francis' side have got what it takes to reach the top flight this season. "I feel Birmingham are one of the main contenders for promotion," he said.

Premiership focus: Keeper discarded by Newcastle looks to reassert his England credentials at Upton Park

Happy end to Hislop's nightmare



IAN
STAFFORD

'I'm full of emotions again, like nerves, hope and determination. I know I face a real challenge here, and that is exactly what I needed'

HE SAT on the Newcastle bench at Wembley on FA Cup final day, wondering whether his stubbornness had cost him a career in English football. Shaka Hislop was on his way out of the club, but had no idea where, if anywhere, he might end up.

With his wife eight months pregnant with their second child, times were indeed worrying for the Hislop family. Now, three months later, however, the goalkeeper from Trinidad makes his home debut for West Ham in a nice, gentle opener against Manchester United.

Hislop will have every reason to smile this afternoon as he greets his new home supporters at Upton Park. Until last Saturday's win at Sheffield Wednesday he had not made a Premiership appearance since February, the month when contract negotiations with Newcastle collapsed.

"They wanted me to stay, and made me a good offer, but there were certain parts of the contract where we just couldn't meet eye to eye," the 29-year-old admits. "So I refused to sign. I knew what was going to happen to me as a result. I was never first choice keeper again for Newcastle."

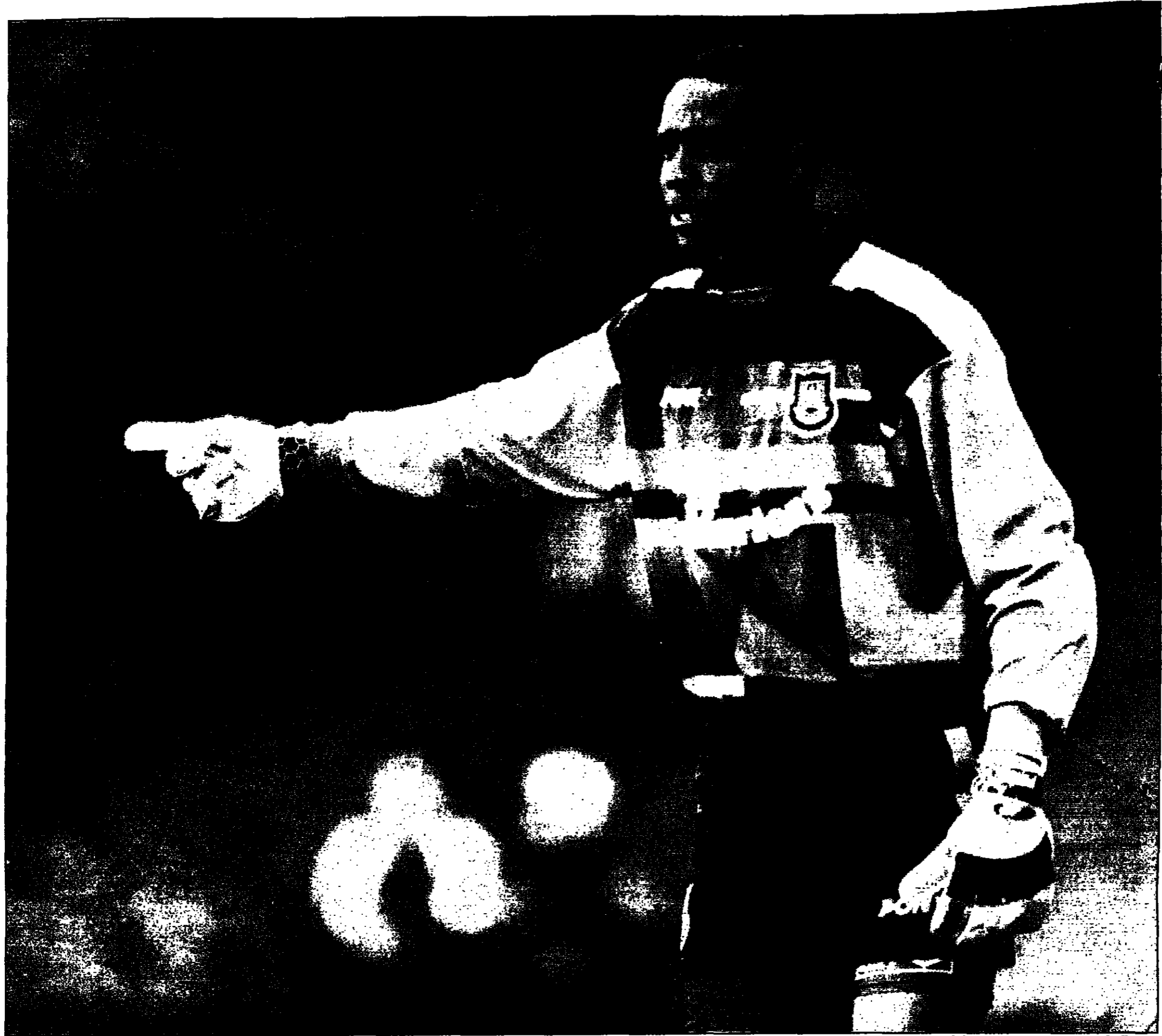
Even without the contract complications, the man who left Reading to join Kevin Keegan's cavaliers was growing increasingly disillusioned with the rotation of goalkeepers under Kenny Dalglish.

"With Shay Given joining me and Pavel Srnicek, I always knew competition would be tough, but I never felt I was ever given a real, extended run in the first team. I always knew that one mistake in a match could quite easily cost me my place, and that's no way to feel in training or during an actual game."

Still, Hislop appreciated the irony of the timing of his dropping from the Newcastle team. "It was the same week that I was picked for the England squad to play against Chile," he adds, fulfilling a dream which justified his decision not to play for Trinidad, despite pleas from the island and even from FIFA, football's world governing body. "I was on the bench for the match and it made it a very strange and emotional week for me."

For the rest of the season Hislop sat on the sidelines and wondered if he had done the right thing. "I had to live with the consequences of my stand and it caused me a great deal of concern, believe me. Any choice you make in football these days seems to have immense consequences."

"The longer it went on the closer I came to buckling under the pressure and signing a contract. For long periods I wondered if I had blown my big chance in football. Then I realised how I felt at the start of the season, when I wasn't part of the team. I didn't want to keep experiencing that,



Shaka Hislop organises the West Ham defence during a pre-season friendly. 'The dressing-room is buzzing, we all get along and it's just great to be playing again'

Ben Radford/Allsport

so I stuck to my guns. I'd like to think I'm my own man."

He can say that again. One of a handful of black goalkeepers in English football, Hislop can count among his friends his fellow Trinidadian Brian Lara, and Dwight Yorke, from the neighbouring island of Tobago, who makes his debut for Manchester United against West Ham. Hislop also has a degree from an American university in robotics, and spent a year at NASA headquarters working on manufacturing robots for use in space. Oh, and his very original African Christian name derives from King Shaka Zulu. Not your run-of-the-mill footballer, then.

He was spotted on tour, playing for the wonderfully named Baltimore Blast against Aston Villa at the Birmingham National Indoor Arena, where an agent recommended him to Reading. Helping the Berkshire side to the First Division play-offs three years ago, Hislop then made what he believed would be his dream move to the North-east.

At first it worked well, but soon he found himself swapping the goalkeeper's jersey with first Srnicek, and then Given, as the club's prospects began to falter. "Newcastle's mentality has changed under Dalglish and it's going to take a little time to get used to it.

Keegan was all about attack, whilst Dalglish is trying to build from a defensive base. I have no doubt success will come to St James' Park, though, but it won't happen overnight."

Not though, with Hislop, who departed for a holiday in Trinidad three days after the Cup final with his pregnant wife, and with no club to return to in readiness for the new season. "I collected my loser's medal and left," he says. "I was thrilled to be there at Wembley, of course, but since February I'd felt on the sidelines at the club. Sure, I was worried about my future, but I had faith."

With a second daughter added to his family, a mightily relieved Hislop

signed for West Ham on 1 July. This time he had a contract to his liking, and just felt good to be in a team again.

"I'm loving it," he freely admits. "The dressing-room is buzzing, we all genuinely get along very well, and it's just great to be playing again after such a long break. I think everyone sees West Ham as an excellent side, and there's no reason why we can't do very well this season in all competitions."

"Of course, the competition for the goalkeeper's jersey is tough here, too. Right now I am the number one, because I played at Sheffield Wednesday, but that's only one game. I know that Craig Forrest

and Ludo Mikosko will both be trying hard to play as well."

"It felt so good when I ran on to the pitch at Hillsborough. I felt a mixture of nervousness and joy. To keep a clean sheet and be part of a winning team on my debut made it the perfect start. Now I hope for a good result against Manchester United, and I'm really looking forward to playing at Upton Park as a West Ham player."

And after this? Presumably the man who was born in London but left for Trinidad at the age of two would like to secure a first international cap? "Well, obviously I want to get myself back into the England squad.

The past few months haven't done me any favours there, but I'm hoping for a fresh, new start at West Ham, and a good enough season to get myself back into the reckoning."

Whatever may happen this afternoon, he has every right to be pleased with himself. After an agonising period of time when his nerves were stretched to their limit, he was proved to be right. "It was beginning to turn into a nightmare at Newcastle, so I'm overjoyed how things have worked out," he says.

"Now I know I made the right choice," Shaka Hislop laughs. "Believe me, it's a very sweet feeling to have."

Spurs move for Solsjkaer

BY MARK BURTON

TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR have agreed a fee of £5.5m with Manchester United for Ole Gunnar Solsjkaer.

The Spurs chairman, Alan Sugar, is hoping to meet the 25-year-old Norwegian international striker over the weekend to discuss personal terms.

The north London club, who have been looking for a replacement for Jürgen Klinsmann after the German left White Hart Lane at the end of last season, stepped up their interest in Solsjkaer after United completed their protracted capture of Dwight Yorke from Aston Villa for £12.6m yesterday.

Alex Ferguson initially insisted he wanted to keep all his strikers to maintain a strong squad for United's campaign for the European Cup, but it seems that the United manager has changed his mind. The acquisition of Yorke meant Solsjkaer, who scored 17 goals when United won the League in the 1996-97 season, slipped to fifth place among the strikers at Old Trafford, behind Yorke, Andy Cole, Paul Scholes and Teddy Sheringham.

While Solsjkaer would stay at Old Trafford, Ferguson

admitted that "things change throughout the course of a season", and even during the course of 24 hours, it seems. He also added that if players were not happy then that altered things, and that could be a cue to the change of heart at Old Trafford. However, Solsjkaer, whose seven-year contract with United does not expire until 2004, had maintained that he was happy at the club, even when he is not in the starting 11.

Now they have permission to talk to the Norwegian, Tottenham, with no European competition to offer a prospective player and the last season's struggle against relegation fresh in their minds must now use powers of persuasion that have failed them in their pursuit of other, high profile targets.

The fall-out from the Yorke transfer continued yesterday with John Barnwell, the chief executive of the League Managers' Association, defending John Gregory, who was upset by losing the striker from his Aston Villa side.

Barnwell said he "cringed" when he read Gregory's comments about wanting to shoot Yorke when he heard he wanted to leave Villa Park. "When I read it I must say I thought it

was a slightly extreme statement," Barnwell said. "The manner in which he displayed his feelings left a little bit to be desired."

"Managers are not always the most loquacious people and sometimes do not pick the right words to express themselves. John is an emotional man who wears his heart on his sleeve and I think his statement came straight from his heart. He was just showing his frustration and disappointment at losing a player he had fought so hard to keep."

Arsenal intend to keep Patrick Vieira for a further two years, as the French World Cup player has signed an extension to his contract. Arsène Wenger, Arsenal's French manager, said: "He is staying here until he is 28 and that stability is very important."

Roy Hodgson, however, may have a bit of work to do to persuade two of his strikers that their future lies with Blackburn. Rovers's manager, has a surfeit of strikers, but he has told his unhappy pair, Kevin Gallacher and Martin Dahlin, to grin and bear it. Gallacher and Dahlin have lost their place in the Rovers team after Hodgson's £7.25m acquisition of

Kevin Davies from Southampton.

Everton, who have a similar image problem after being caught up with Spurs in the scramble for survival last season, have conceded defeat in their attempt to sign Mario Stanic, the Croatian World Cup defender, from Parma.

Walter Smith, the new manager at Goodison Park, had offered £8.2m to lure Stanic and unite him with Slaven Bilic, who plays alongside him in Croatia's back line. Parma were apparently determined to keep him in Italy.

Abroad is where foreign players should now stay, so Alan Shearer thinks. Speaking ahead of Newcastle's visit to Chelsea today, a game which is likely to feature players from as many as 13 different countries, Shearer expressed concern at the limited opportunities now afforded to English players.

He did not object to world class players coming here, but he said: "The problem you face is when you bring in a lot of foreigners who are of the same ability as English players. I'm sure that will stifle the growth of young players and that could be a problem for the English league in years to come."



Solsjkaer: Spurs talks

The Wales coach, Bobby Gould, has called up the Nottingham Forest midfielder Andy Johnson and the Notts County goalkeeper Darren Ward for the European Championship qualifying match against Italy at Anfield on 5 September.

Wales squad (v Italy, European Championship qualifying, Group One, Anfield, 5 Sept): Jones (Southampton), Ward (Notts Co), Savage (Leicester), Bernard (Bristol), A Williams (Wolves), Symons (Preston), Coleman (Preston), Roberts (Cardiff), Johnson (Notts Co), Pennington (Bristol), Harrison (West Ham), at Hughes (Southampton), Blake (Bolton), Saunders (Sheff Wed), Speed (Newcastle), Clegg (Nott Unit). Two players to be added later.

The Irishman cometh in the age of miracles

ONE RECENT Saturday we drove down to London to see Kevin Spacey in *The Usual Suspects* at the Old Vic. I'll see Kevin Spacey in anything. The play is set in the No Chance Saloon, a New York bar where a dozen bums drink, indulge their pipe dreams and wait for Hickey. This Hickey (Spacey) is something of a hero, a salesman-messiah.

As I sat watching the play I became eerily conscious that there was something familiar about this situation; a sense of déjà vu came over me. And then it hit me. This was Filbert Street before Martin O'Neill. Only Filbert Street back then was even worse: we didn't know Hickey - sorry, O'Neill - was coming, and we didn't even dare to have dreams.

OK, maybe that's not quite true. Leicester's greatest literary supporter, Julian Barnes, had made City win the FA Cup in his novel, *A History of the World in 10 1/2 Chapters*, but only as part of a dream sequence. Barnes knew that even in a novel you couldn't stretch reality that far.

The play turns on Act Two, when Hickey convinces the assembled drunks that they can all make their pipe dreams come true, and sends them off in search of their personal eldorado. Spacey is, of course, charismatic and articulate, just like Martin O'Neill.

Act Two is a re-run of Martin's arrival at Leicester, when we were in the Nationwide League, but he told us we

FAN'S EYE VIEW

MARTIN O'NEILL

BY ROBERT FORRYAN

could be in the Premiership, and even in Europe. Unbelievably, within 18 months, both dreams had come to pass. We were chasing our dreams with Martin at the helm.

But years of following Leicester make you nervous, and a summer of not knowing whether O'Neill was staying or

leaving barely kept the dreams alive. We needn't have worried, though, and 70 minutes into the new season the scoreline of Manchester United 0, Leicester City 2 proved that the age of miracles hasn't passed.

So why do I feel so uneasy? Well, it's Act Three really. In Act Three, the down-and-outs all return to the No-Chance Saloon with their dreams in tatters, while realising that Hickey has feet of clay.

Now, I don't think Martin O'Neil has feet of clay. I really don't, but I do doubt whether the Leicester directors have either the courage or the cash to lift us into the major Big Time, and thus to keep O'Neill on board. And if they don't, we'll soon be back in the no-chance Nationwide League, eating McWolfs burgers again.

Driving home after the play, I began wondering how this prophetic allegory of a Midlands football club came to be written some 50 years ago. And then it came to me. The secret was in the playwright's name, Eugene O'Neill. He must have been Martin's grandad.

2001/10/15

SPORT

MONTY FALLS AS NICKLAUS RISES P23 • THE END OF HISLOP'S NIGHTMARE P30

Beckham enters hostile ground

FOOTBALL
BY PHIL SHAW

TO THE French, St Etienne is famous for the weapons it has made for armies from Napoleon to Nato as much for Michel Platini and Les Verts of two decades past. In East London today, the events of one balmy, barmy night in the city seem certain to be used as a stick with which to beat David Beckham.

All week, appeals have gone out to West Ham's supporters not to pillory Beckham for the moment of petulance which led to his being widely blamed for England's World Cup exit at the Geoffroy Guichard Stadium. Ian Wright, who knows all about vilification by rival fans, led the way, warning that a feeling of injustice might help Manchester United

by inspiring Beckham. He was followed by Rio Ferdinand, Bobby Moore's widow, Sir Geoff Hurst and the player's father.

Whether requests for a sense of proportion will have the desired effect must be unlikely. In Beckham's only previous appearance away from Old Trafford since the Argentina episode, the Charity Shield at Wembley, he was taunted mercilessly by Arsenal fans and gave a subdued display.

Last Saturday, jeering Leicester followers provoked the United crowd into a song suggesting they could stick England where the sun tends not to shine. Any hint of a lack of patriotism, while unfair to Beckham, runs the risk of further inflaming prejudices.

United's visits to West Ham already carry an undercurrent of

hostility, which was pronounced when Paul Ince returned in Alex Ferguson's midfield. Beckham, as a Londoner who "always wanted to play for United", would have been a target for the less tolerant elements at Upton Park anyway.

None of which should be allowed to detract from a potentially momentous occasion. For West Ham it is a test, against a club they have never beaten in the Premiership, of their belief that they can be up with the leaders.

While Wright makes his home debut, Ferguson will plunge Dwight Yorke into the fray after his £12.5m move from Aston Villa. In the climate of antipathy towards post-Bosman "player power", aka Van Hooftdonk Syndrome, he may receive as much abuse as Beckham.

If St Etienne has become a

milestone for one of England's brightest talents, it will be remembered as a milestone by another. Michael Owen today plays his first competitive match before a besotted Anfield since his stupendous goal against Argentina.

Tottenham yesterday agreed a fee of £5.5m with Manchester United for their striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. The 25-year-old Norwegian international now has to meet with Alan Sugar, the Spurs chairman, to settle terms.

No ordinary contest either, but an early opportunity for Liverpool to pit their title aspirations against the champions Arsenal. Too early, argues Gerard Houllier, who claims neither team is yet in "top shape". Proving his assimilation into Scouse society,

Liverpool's co-manager praises the "well balanced and homogeneous" side built by Arsene Wenger.

As the France's technical director, Houllier oversaw the development of players such as Nicolas Anelka. Although he describes Owen, 18, and Anelka, 19, as "totally different players", both have a penchant for dribbling at speed which should reveal much about the defensive soundness of their opponents.

Arsenal have a score to settle - two in fact, having lost 1-0 to Liverpool at Highbury last season and 4-0 away with a largely reserve line-up. A repeat of either scoreline may have the Kop chanting: "We're so homogeneous it's unbelievable".

The pressure to succeed on the big spenders is so intense that defeat for Chelsea or Newcastle at Stamford Bridge would shorten the

odds against Gianluca Vialli or Kenny Dalglish becoming the first managerial casualty.

Chelsea's international brigade were hastily written off in some quarters following the defeat at Coventry, despite a positive start by Pierluigi Casiraghi and the absence of Brian Laudrup.

Marcel Desailly, in particular, was reminded of how fickle fate and the media can be. Problems with Alan Shearer would lend credence to the view that France's indomitable World Cup centre-back is better suited to the role of midfield anchor.

Newcastle's record in the capital does not inspire confidence - one win in 10 at Chelsea is typical - while Shearer needs to improve on a tally of two goals in 19 League games since returning from injury if his

England captaincy is not to be undermined.

Tottenham's Christian Gross is another manager who urgently needs to get the critics off his back with victory over Sheffield Wednesday. An Aston Villa win against Middlesbrough tomorrow is vital to John Gregory for different reasons, with supporters unsettled by the loss of Steve Staunton and Yorke.

Meanwhile, whatever the evidence to the contrary from West Ham, across the Thames is a game to disprove reports of the death of romance in football. After long years of lower-division fare, and several more in which their great natural bowl of a ground stood empty, Charlton's match with Southampton is the first top-flight match at The Valley since Tottenham visited on Good Friday in 1957.



Britain's Denise Lewis clears the bar in the high jump on the way to a sparkling performance on the first day of the heptathlon at the European Championships in Budapest yesterday

AP

Backley throws down gauntlet

ATHLETICS
BY MIKE ROWBOTTOM
in Budapest

STEVE BACKLEY announced his intention of winning a third consecutive European javelin title here yesterday in ideal fashion, qualifying for tomorrow's final with an opening throw of 87.45 metres - break-

ing his own championship record by 15 centimetres.

Asked what his tactics would be before coming to Budapest, Backley responded: "Going big early is the key. That puts the pressure on the others." Plan A is working well so far. Now the 29-year-old Sidcup athlete needs to repeat the performance against a field that still includes all his main rivals.

Aki Parviainen, the 23-year-old Finn who has beaten Backley three times out of five this season, progressed with 80.65 metres, but his fellow countryman, Juha Laukkanen, came closest to the Briton's effort with 83.71. Nevertheless, it is Parviainen who is more of a concern to Backley.

"Aki has thrown three personal bests already this sea-

son," Backley said. "He's young, and it's helpful that he has such a simple technique which won't break down under pressure. It makes him the danger man. Mind you, the Finns are always under tremendous pressure of expectation because this is more important to their supporters than any other sport."

Four years ago in Helsinki,

Backley witnessed that pressure at first hand as Seppo Rätty attempted to win the European title on home ground. Neither he, nor even the world and Olympic champion, Jan Zelezny, could beat Backley on that occasion as the Briton registered his most prestigious victory.

As he seeks to move closer to the championship record of four javelin titles held by the Czech Janis Lusis, whose son Voldemar failed to progress from yesterday's qualifying, Backley has Zelezny in his corner. The Briton trained in South Africa throughout the winter with the Olympic champion and his coach, Jan Pospisil. And although Zelezny disappeared from contention this year when he was seriously injured his shoulder in training four months ago, the support has continued. Indeed, Zelezny has travelled here to watch the event.

Backley warmed up for these championships by spending two weeks in Nymburk, 30km from Prague, working with both men. He was joined by his own coach, John Trower, and British colleagues Mick Hill and Mark Roberson, both of whom also reached today's final.

It is a sporting alliance that brings to mind that of the high hurdlers Colin Jackson and Mark McKoy before the 1992 Olympics - although on that occasion it was the Canadian who appeared to profit at the Briton's expense as he took a title that was expected to go to Jackson.

Backley and his British colleagues have benefited hugely from the foot drills they have learnt from the Czech in the course of the past year - Roberson in particular has benefited, raising his 10-year-old personal best by five metres.

The Britons' preparations also took in the timing of their event here. In Nymburk they

were getting up at 6.30am and throwing at the same time as their qualifying event took place yesterday. Everything is going according to plan so far, but Backley will not be assuming that the job is done just yet.

"There are half-a-dozen guys who could be in with a shout," he said. "The fact that I have won this title twice doesn't count for anything. It's a fresh competition and a different challenge every time."

For Hill, tomorrow represents a chance to simplify his lifestyle. Backley's late arrival into the silver medal position at last year's World Championships shifted him from third to fourth at the end of the day. It was a crucial alteration for the 33-year-old Yorkshireman, who had been forced to return to work the previous year - he is athletics development officer for South Leeds - because he was not making sufficient income from the event.

"Getting the bronze last year would have made a big difference to my family," he said. "I would have been able to negotiate far better fees than I have been getting. But Steve and I were friends again by the evening."

Robert Korzeniowski, of Poland, added the European gold medal to his Olympic and world titles when he won the men's 50km walk. The 30-year-old Pole was in the front group from the start and began pulling away at 40km. He finished the gruelling course on a muggy morning in 3hr 43.51min to beat Valentin Kononen of Finland by a comfortable margin of 38 seconds.

"This is my third title but my first ever European medal and now, finally, I am a complete athlete," Korzeniowski said. Lewis shines in heptathlon,

Published by Independent Newspapers (UK) Limited, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4DL, and printed at Merton Colver Print, 26 Ashurst Road, Wokingham, RG40 3JH. Back issues available from Independent Newspapers, 01883 840730. Saturday 22 August 1998 Registered as a newspaper with the Post Office.

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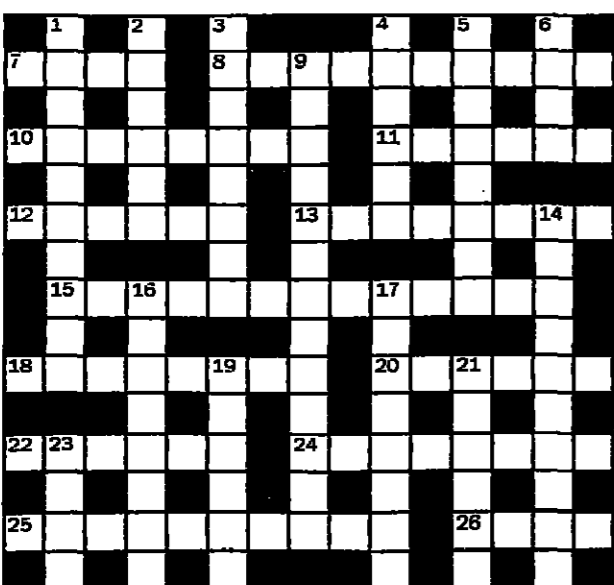
THE SATURDAY CROSSWORD

No. 3696, Saturday 22 August

By Mass

ACROSS

DOWN



- 7 Music, Eastern mood (4)
8 Brightly ornate belt reinforcing vulgar bedlam (10)
10 Author, army type (3)
11 Associates from North in digs (6)
12 Border: immobilisation's reported (6)
13 Friendly note I detected in message (8)
15 Reach expiry date? (4, 3, 6)
18 Lengthen supporting essay (8)
20 Recorded without piano beat (6)
22 Old coin, gold, buried in timeless rock (6)
24 Totally gone on punch (8)
25 A play with scope, complex religious theme (10)
26 Endless table fish (4)
- 1 Redemption's of interment to him (10)
2 Note on timber for making fret (6)
3 One dwelling or another quartering English soldiers (8)
4 Sauce, bitter in the main, from Bordeaux? (6)
5 Memory aid when consuming volumes? (8)
6 Tube line (4)
9 Course arranged by dons: it's superb (5-4, 4)
14 Item of mail, first of the three woven in metal (10)
16 Cause of a hazy scene in the Fall? (8)
17 The tune's beaten Queen's release (8)
19 Records pounds in Indian money (6)
21 Royal figure, about fourth of Plantagenets (8)
23 Cut East and run (4)

The first five correct solutions to this week's puzzle opened next Thursday receive hand-drawn copies of... Answers and winners' names will be published next Saturday. Send solutions to Saturday Crossword, P.O. Box 4018, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 4DL. Please use the box number and postcode and give your own postcode. Last week's winners: G Kerr, Glasgow; J Watson, Glasgow; N Dodson, Draycott; E Lloyd Parry, Merseyside; J Ridd, Luton.

Friday's solution
CERNOBYL RENEWAL
R N N E A T H O
K A L G A M D I O N I Y
S M A P I H S A
SUPERHERO TOTAL
I L R C L Y
S I G E A R T I L L E R Y
Y I E U
W H O L E M E A L B R E A D
R M S E N O
E X I S T Z E S T I F I C A L L Y
T I R O C E A E
C E N T R A I N O M I G R O N
A E I E P N C N
T I D I N G S E X T R E M E

Last Saturday's solution
P A R T I S H R E G I S T E R
E E T W N M U O
R E A N G U A R D P A N I C
S L H L L E N
O V I D S T I D E S A D D L E
I L S M C S G
A S T R I D E S T A F F S
L I N I P S U T I A N A
K E S U
S I G H T I N G L A C E D S H U N
E U U W E B C
R O T O R D E E P S O U T H
U E I R A L E
O P P O S I T E N U M B E R

COMMENT • ARTS & BOOKS • COUNTRY & GARDEN • TRAVEL



BY ANDREW MARTIN

Continued on page 2



SIX PAGES OF
TRAVEL

SILK CUT ULTRA IS LOW IS SILK CUT ULTRA
SMOKING WHEN PREGNANT HARMS YOUR BABY

TOMORROW IN

THE
ON SUNDAY

NEWS & COMMENT



**AN Wilson analyses
Britain's true feelings
for the Princess of Wales**



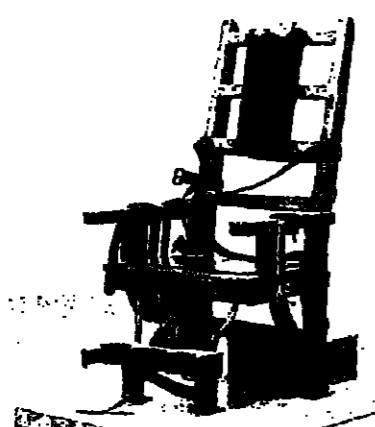
**Robert Fisk reveals
the full story of
Osama bin Laden**

REAL LIFE

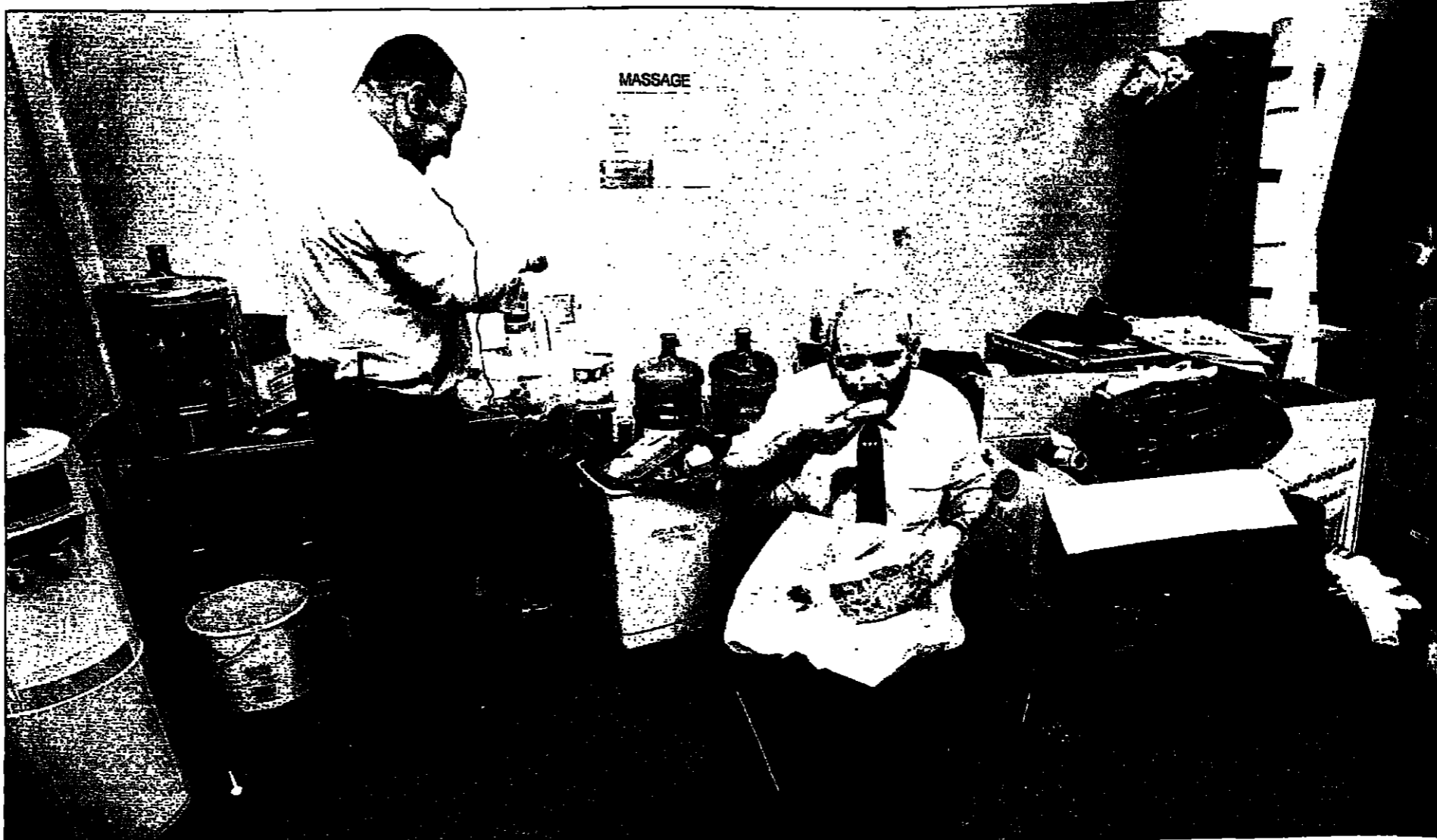


**Rachel Weisz
explains why she
isn't sexy**

SUNDAY REVIEW



**The executioner's story:
a terrifying account
of death in America**



Continuing our series of pictures from the Edinburgh Festival which runs throughout August, security guards take a break behind the scenes at one of the venues

Geraint Lewis

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Post letters to Letters to the Editor and include a daytime telephone number, fax to 0171 293 2056 or e-mail to letters@independent.co.uk
E-mail correspondents are asked to give a postal address. Letters may be edited for length and clarity

US air strikes

Sir: Given the US's determination to stamp out organisations that use random violence against innocent civilians for political ends, should we brace ourselves for cruise missiles raining down on that other hotbed of international terrorism, Dundalk? Or, for that matter, Tel Aviv? Why not? Because white people would surely die. Sadly, bashing the Arabs is turning into a favourite presidential pastime.
GRIFF KANE
Blyth, Northumberland

Sir: I note the support given by Tony Blair to the American bombing raids in Sudan and Afghanistan. I wonder why the Americans do not feel that they should sit down and negotiate peace with those who threaten them as the British are encouraged to do with the Irish. Would President Clinton be so happy to endorse British bombing raids against terrorist bases in Ireland or against those who sponsor Irish terrorism in the US?
COLIN ROSS
Glasgow

Sir: I agree with Robert Fisk ("Bin Laden will take his revenge", 21 August) about US double standards and those it selectively calls terrorists. But he omitted to mention the most audacious example of Washington turning a blind eye to terrorism: the arrival of Gerry Adams in the White House.
CLIVE GREEN
Brentford, Middlesex

Sir: The US claims its strike on the pharmaceutical plant in Sudan was justified because it was manufacturing chemical weapons for international terrorists. Even if this was the case, who came to the conclusion that explosives were the most expedient solution to the problem? The bombing of such a target put civilian lives at risk.

The distinction between terrorism and legitimate military action has just become slightly more blurred, yet I wonder if as many governments will condemn

the US as they did the Nairobi bombers.
DANIEL SMITH
Hemel Hempstead,
Hertfordshire

Sir: How very clever of President Clinton to wage war in a region known to be in possession of nuclear weapons and a hunger for martyrdom. Nothing like a nuclear war to keep people's minds off the President's sex life. He certainly has confirmed our worst fears about where he keeps his brains.
CHERRY MOSTESHAR
Oxford

Sir: A butterfly flutters its wings in Amazonia and a hurricane strikes the Pacific. A single act of inappropriate sex in Washington starts a holy global war in the Sudan!
Dr DAVID RHODES
Nottingham

Case for exams

Sir: Bidisha ("Dreaming spires come tumbling down", 20 August) suggests that Oxbridge is still dominated by the "boys at the top" who insist on pointless, crammed exams rather than the obviously superior method of examination by dissertation. Perhaps I could rephrase her question.

Perhaps she thinks constructing a clear, rational argument backed up with source quotations out of thin air under pressure of time and exhaustion is somehow easier than writing 10,000 words over weeks or months of paraphrased arguments from books on *Beowulf*.

Oxbridge has made concessions in almost every subject to the demands, mostly from female students, for continual assessment and coursework rather than final exams. But the old system should remain available too. There will always be some students - yes, they may even be male - who will produce better results under examination conditions. Why should that achievement be denigrated, or denied them, because others find it too hard?
TIMOTHY MORRIS
Faringdon, Oxfordshire

Sir: I am a 38-year-old, comprehensive-educated, working mother. I did a PhD at a college for mature women when my children started school, and am now the admissions tutor at another all-women Cambridge college. I wasn't surprised when I didn't recognise myself or my colleagues in Bidisha's depiction of Oxbridge dons, "sat in their dining room mumbling 'Ah, yes, now how to get some more of these ... these poor people into the colleges.'" ("Dreaming spires come tumbling down", 20 August).

I did, however, feel inexplicably hurt. Sorry if I've missed the joke. It's just that after a heartbreaking day on the phone consoling disappointed applicants and agonising with colleagues over decisions - not mumbling in the dining room but crying in it - my sense of humour has deserted me.
DIANA LIPTON
Neunham College
Cambridge

Fat cats invest

Sir: G A C Garner (letter, 18 August) wonders what the fat cats do with all the cream. I can tell you what they do with some of it.

They invest it in PEPs, Tassas and pension schemes, all of which give some sort of tax relief. Of course, one person's tax break is another person's tax burden. So G A C Garner on his £50,000 a year or less is probably delighted to learn that he is subsidising the investment portfolios of people who have incomes 10 or more times as big as his own.

Since it appears to be acceptable to means-test the unfortunate before we give them taxpayers' money, should not we also means-test the fortunate before we dole out to them? I would suggest that, like the unfortunate, they should claim their tax refunds forthrightly, by signing a piece of paper which says, like the benefit claims form, that they may go to prison if they say anything which is untrue.
W J HYDE
Offham,
Kent

Landmine ban

Sir: Mike Croll is right that mine clearance should be given a much higher priority (Review, 20 August), but he is wrong to regard the campaign to ban landmines as a waste of time. The objective is to reduce the overall number of mines in the ground as quickly as possible, and reducing the rate at which new ones are laid is a vital part of that. It is achieved as much by changing attitudes as by legal process.

True, the campaign has taken more than its share of the money and limelight, but it, and Princess Diana, have put landmines on the political agenda. True also that "the real battle is going to be won by people with sticks and trowels", but they will lose the war without the "PR initiatives and hot air".
BILL LINTON
London N13

St Paul and gays

Sir: There is truth in both the letters of Michael Halls (12 August) and Paul Marston (18 August) on the subject of the curious word *arsenokoitai*. Dr Halls is right to say that it is almost unknown outside the New Testament. Its exact meaning is speculative. It is very strange that this almost unknown word should have been used by St Paul to describe homosexual behaviour, which was common in society at that time, when he could have used many other words frequent in classical literature. Dr Marston is right that the most plausible translation is "going to bed with a male". It is used in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and is probably a translation of the Hebrew words *mishkanu zekur*.

St Paul clearly associated homosexual behaviour with idolatry and adultery. Jews of the time linked homosexual behaviour with pagan religious practice. Sacred prostitution of both sexes was a feature of both Canaanite and Graeco-Roman religions. And in an age where most people were married, the majority of homosexual behaviour post

adolescence, would have been adulterous. Dr Marston is not justified in linking Jesus' condemnation of adultery with a general condemnation of homosexuality.

Dr Marston refers to 1 Timothy 1:10. This is the most interesting example of the use of the word. It is used with two others, *pornoi* and *andropodistes*. *Pornoi* was the usual word for a male prostitute. There were many of these in the Mediterranean ports, and there were brothels staffed with male sexual slaves. Seneca in particular condemned this use of boys who were often castrated. *Andropodistes* was the word most often used for a kidnapper or slave dealer.

Perhaps Paul is saying that sacred male prostitutes, those who use them and those who procure them can have no place in the new Christian communities he was founding, and no one will argue with that. The Rev NEIL DAWSON
St Paul's, Knightsbridge
London SW1

Drink advice

Sir: Women who might be confused or alarmed by your report (21 August) that just five units of alcohol a week could affect their chances of getting pregnant should be aware that the study concerned used American units to calculate alcohol intake. These are one-and-a-half times as big as the UK unit, on which the Government's sensible drinking guidance is based.

Women in the UK who are trying to conceive are already advised that they should not drink more than one or two units once or twice a week - only about half as much alcohol as the five American units as measured in the latest research.
JEAN COUSSINS
Director
The Portman Group
London W1

Operatic score

Sir: There are few "first rank serious composers" who would still be giants had they never written a single opera (Dr

Gerald Silverman, letter, 17 August). Opera commissions kept most of the great writers in food and ink, enabling them to produce symphonies and chamber music; many lived to write opera while some wrote opera to live.

As a singer and lover of 19th-century French song in particular, I would like nothing more than to be able to perform, and hear sung, the rare gems of French melodie. However, I am aware that my audience is strictly limited. There are few singers giving high-calibre recitals on world stages who have not carved their names in the opera world first. Through these singers' popularity, people are tempted to unearth the treasures of lesser-known repertoire by unknown composers or those best known for opera. Can this be such a bad thing?
ADELINE RAMAGE
London NW1

IN BRIEF

Sir: There has been concern recently over mothers who have given their children for adoption and then endeavoured to re-establish contact. But what about the grandparents who have not only lost contact with their grandchildren through no choice of their own but have no legal rights to retain contact? Grandparents are part of the child's growing up and will always have a unique bond. When will there be legal rights for grandchildren and grandparents to have contact? There are hundreds suffering in silence.
I COLLINS
Harlow, Essex

Sir: "Bonking", in the sense Ani Harris describes (letter, 18 August), is still current usage among cyclists and by no means limited to the inter-war years. In *Cycling for Fitness* (Pan Books 1989), John Schubert uses the terms "bonking" and "getting the bonk" to describe the effects of glycogen depletion on a cyclist out riding.
EDWARD WALKER
St Helens, Merseyside

Thomas the Tank Engine stole my son

From page one.

of Thomas, but then almost any business person would be. Awdry was a quiet, unworldly, fogeyish vicar, son of another such. He began writing his stories not for money, but because his son had measles. He didn't complain when people called him the "puff puff parson", though that denigrated the two things most dear to him: trains and God. He was accused of political incorrectness because Thomas's coaches, Annie and Clarabel, are frankly not very bright. Britt Allcroft, by contrast, is forward-looking, has a superb business brain and a punkish hairdo, and calls herself "Ms". Yet she makes much of the fact

that she sticks to the vision of Awdry: a gentle, bucolic world in which trains go off the rails but always come right in the end. "In a world in which a lot of life is nasty and there's so much technology that we're got to struggle to understand," says Allcroft, "we need something that's about love and affection and goodness and comfort."

But I wasn't convinced. For one thing, Thomas is enormous in America, yet most American children never go on a real train. We discussed the appeal of an extinct type of humble British steam train to the children of the world, and she suggested that part of the appeal of Thomas is that his appeal can't be explained.

My two-year-old would agree. "Why do you like Thomas?", I ask, and he replies, a trifle impatiently, "Because I just do."

It is obvious, really. Children like Thomas because they know him, and they know him because of the marketing. The real dynamo for Ms Allcroft has been the broadcasting of *Thomas the Tank Engine and Friends* on satellite TV channels for children.

But the roots of Thomas's deeper, inherent appeal are more mysterious, and I can offer only some personal thoughts. Thomas may represent a gentler, slower paced world to my son, but there is no nostalgia in this. Steam trains

abolished 30 years before he was born; but he also doesn't properly grasp the idea of "yesterday", let alone "the past".

On the other hand, I do like the nostalgic aspect of Thomas. I also read and enjoyed the Thomas books in my youth, in the days before Awdry's little train had conquered the world. These facts lead directly to my wife's thesis about our son's monomania: "He likes Thomas because you do." A scary thought.

Another possibility is that my two-year-old appreciates the subtle relationship within the Thomas stories, and the fact that Christian kindness ultimately wins out. But I can't help noticing that he

likes the crashes best, and he's fascinated by the mechanics of Thomas. He knows what distinguishes a tank engine from one with a tender, for example, which maybe most 30-year-olds don't.

We once spoke to a psychologist about my son's obsession - informally (we're not that worried) and his theory was that little boys like trains because they represent the masculine power and capability to which they aspire. My own observation, incidentally, is that Thomas is primarily a boy's toy, but Ms Allcroft denied this emphatically. More confusion.

But two things, at least, are becoming clear to me. First: while by no means

tacky, the Britt-Allcroft-marketed Thomas is a slightly dumbed-down version of Awdry's, and he's aimed at younger children. Second: the ubiquity of Thomas means that children quickly go in and out of their periods of fandom. They eat, sleep and drink Thomas - and then they get bored. My eldest son, who's four - two years younger than I was when my own love-affair with Thomas began, has been cooling towards the Tank Engine for some time, and the other day he finally came out with it. "I don't like Thomas," he said. His younger brother, of course, started bawling at this heresy, but I must admit that I cackled in sheer delight.

JP 11/10/50

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American interests are not always the same as ours

THE UNITED STATES, as President Clinton made quite clear on Thursday night, has struck at terrorist targets in order to defend her own interests. Whether or not there is anything wrong with that, it is worth examining the effect on British interests. Are American interests necessarily our own?

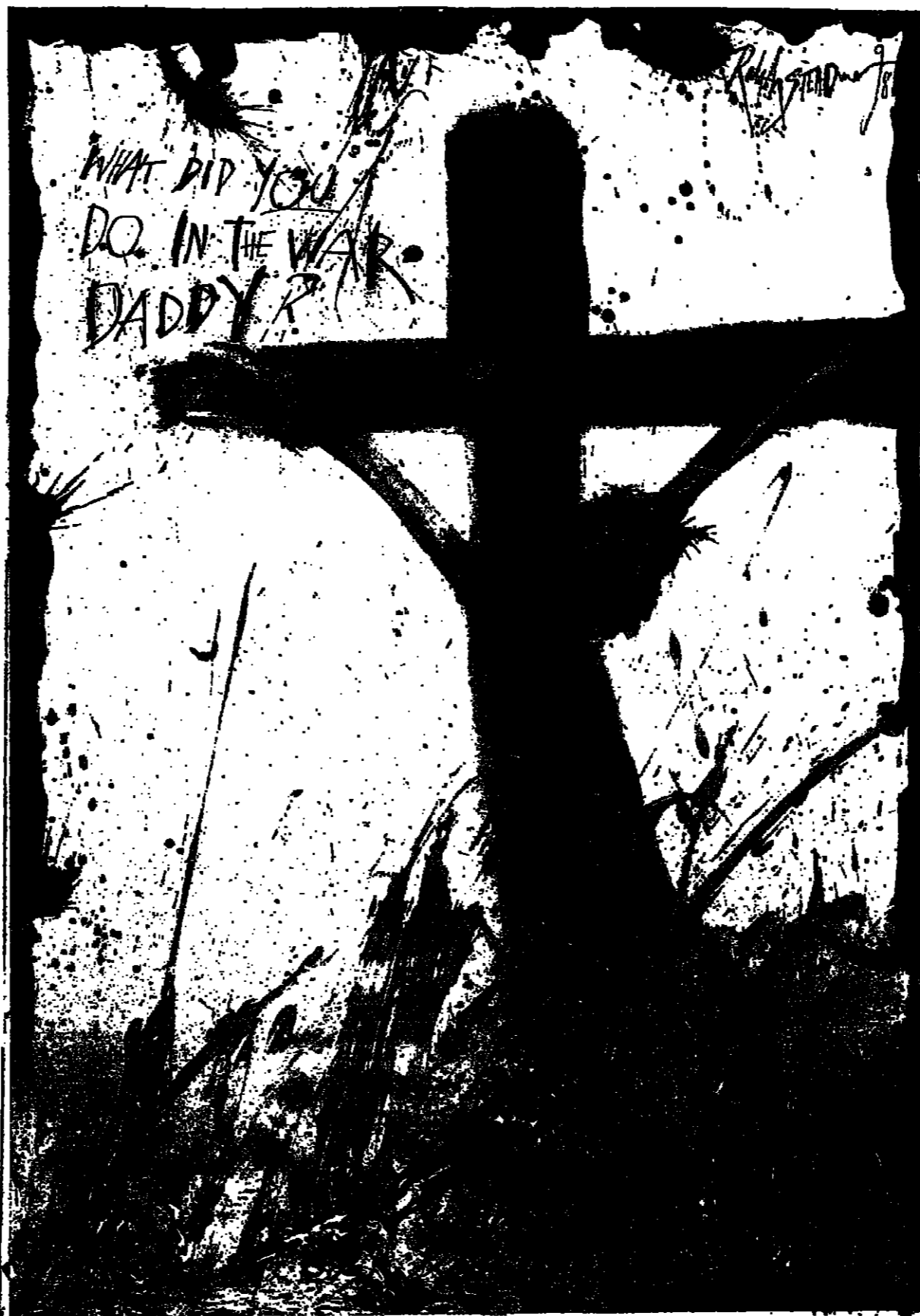
Certainly Downing Street seems to think so, given the Prime Minister's rapid endorsement of Clinton's decision to act militarily. But other world leaders have acted with far greater caution. The French waited 15 hours to issue a very reserved statement; the Chinese reserved judgement; Boris Yeltsin condemned the action. Of the permanent five members of the United Nations Security Council, Britain has been alone in its unqualified support. The legal basis for the American action is suspect at best; the UN Secretary General has already expressed his concern, and the Sudanese are threatening to raise the matter in the General Assembly. No one would wish to defend terrorists, or would lose any sleep if their capacity to maim and kill was destroyed. But do we wish to appear before world opinion as American apologists?

With no crucial British interests immediately at stake, Mr Blair might at least have thought twice about issuing such enthusiastic statements in support of his American friends. He seems to labour under the illusion that his utterances carry the weight they would have 50 years ago, a failing that also marked Mrs Thatcher's time in office. What does it matter if Mr Clinton telephones him minutes before he acts, when Britain has no power to affect events? Clearly, it affords him great pleasure to be so involved; but this limited "consultation" has served only to place British citizens in danger, by creating the impression that Britain has been a party to the raids.

The Americans seem to have been meticulously prepared for their attacks. They withdrew staff from their embassies in the countries about to be attacked; their intelligence services had very detailed information about both the Afghan training areas and the Sudanese chemical factory. They appear to have been less concerned to lessen the impact of their actions on British citizens around the world. British Embassy staff, and her military personnel on active service in the Middle East, had no warning of the danger that they were being placed in.

We must now await the inevitable backlash. The empty American Embassy in the Sudan has been ransacked; the Afghan Taliban have vented their fury on the US and her allies. One French UN soldier serving in Kabul, and an Italian colleague, have already been shot and wounded without their governments being strongly identified with the American action. We must also watch helplessly the developing impact on Britain's diplomatic position, hardly bolstered by our support for an attack which landed missiles in Pakistan, threatening ties with an old and long-established ally. In fact, nowhere do Britain's diplomatic interests seem to have been served.

Then there is Northern Ireland. On what moral scale are the Provisional IRA, still armed if on ceasefire, different to the Islamic extremists led by Osama bin Laden? And on what basis does Mr Clinton urge peaceful bridge-building in Ireland, but deprecate it in



the Middle East and Central Asia? When the President comes to Ireland next month, his credibility will be further undermined by the widespread belief that he deals with terrorism on an ad hoc basis, depending on his domestic political needs.

Mr Clinton is indeed responsible for the safety of American citizens; the impression he gives, though, is that his response is one thing when foreigners are harmed, and quite another when Americans are in

danger. Patriotic and emotional responses were understandable when receiving home the bodies of his diplomats; they are less so now he has had time to reflect. He, at least, can defend his actions under the United Nations Charter as self-defence, but Mr Blair holds no such brief. If we are to live in a world of self-defence and self-interest, we should at least defend ours by refusing to act as if we are the 51st State of the Union. Our special relationship need not become an inappropriate one.

Male dignity is such a faye idea

FAY WELDON thinks that triumphalist feminists are "depriving men of their dignity" by, for instance, putting an advert on television in which a woman implicitly insults her husband by likening him to a car. And this, she says, is a bad thing.

Politeness, however, is regarded as a good thing - especially in this country. Comparing one's husband unfavourably to a car is certainly not polite and is also uncomfortably close to the Fiat advert from the 1970s which said: "If this car was a woman you'd want to pinch her bottom." (Graffiti riposte: "If this woman was a car she's run you over.")

But all is supposedly fair in love and war. Since feminism is about both, it is hard to see why politeness is strictly relevant. And as for "dignity" - what is Ms Weldon's point?

The advert is a piece of role reversal, which means the man in question is only experiencing something that has been experienced by countless women already. Poor bunny.

Sure, two wrongs do not make a right. But to imagine that men cannot cope with something which women have coped with for years is to give them less credit than they deserve. (Learning by example is very effective.)

Who needs "dignity" when the corollary is being patronised? What should women do: put men on a pedestal? Treat them with kid gloves? Refrain from expressing themselves fully when men are around? Sound familiar?

Conversely, the better you know someone, the harder it is to maintain your dignity in their presence. This is because dignity implies distance. The desire to get wrapped up in someone else's mystery is one of the ways we know we are in love. But in order for a relationship to last, patterns have to be created that suit both people and allow them happily to exist in each other's penumbra.

Ms Weldon probably likes the patterns in her own relationships and feels she has achieved the right distances between herself and her friends. But relationships are changing because the world is. It is conceivable that she is not in the target audience of the car advert in question.

The English tendency to maintain one's distance and avoid confrontation is also detectable in her latest statements: after all, those who speak their minds always run the risk of being hurtful and - gosh! - that's not cricket.

But the issue is dignity and there is more dignity to be had in treating people honestly than pussy-footing around trying not to offend.

Trading places

AS IF to prove that Life Isn't Fair, a group of school children from Mustique have been sent on an exchange visit to Eigg, off the West Coast of Scotland. Not since Sir Walter Scott invented the "traditional" tartan kilt in the 19th century has such a successful confidence trick been pulled by the forces of Celtic tourism. So, hats off to the canny Scots - you don't have to have voodoo intuition to detect a tartan conspiracy at work there. Just a woolly jumper, cagoule and midge repellent.

As my grocer said: Thank you Mr Clinton for the kind words

IF THERE is one thing that enrages the Arab world about the United States government - apart from its betrayal of the principles of the peace process, its unconditional support for Israel, its enthusiasm for sanctions that are killing thousands of Iraqi civilians and its continued presence in Saudi Arabia - it is the administration's habit of telling Arabs how much it loves them.

Before every air strike, the President assures his future victims how much he admires them. Ronald Reagan told the Libyan people that America regarded them as friends - then he unleashed his bombers on Tripoli and Benghazi. George Bush waffled on about Iraq's history as the birthplace of civilisation and America's friendship for ordinary Iraqis - before bombing every town and city in Iraq. And this week, as his missiles had just left their ships in the Red Sea and the Arabian Gulf, there was Bill Clinton telling the people of the Middle East that Islam was one of the world's great religions.

As my Beirut grocer put it to me yesterday - his smile as crooked as his message - "it's good of Mr Clinton to tell me about my religion. It's always nice to be informed that religion doesn't condone murder. Thank you, Mr Clinton."

My grocer was not being polite. Clinton's admonition from the White House - "no religion condones the murder of innocent men, women and children" - came across in the Middle East as patronising as well as insulting, coming as it did from a man who is embroiled in a sex scandal. "That filthy man" is how he was called by an Egyptian over the phone to me yesterday, although the Arabs

have not grasped the complexities of Mr Clinton's adventures with Miss Lewinsky (mercifully, there is no word for "oral sex" in Arabic).

What was immediately grasped in the region yesterday, however, was the ease with which the Americans could once again choose an enemy without disclosing any evidence for his guilt and then turn journalists and television commentators into their cheerleaders. "I was so sickened by the constant use of the word 'terrorism' that I turned to French radio," a Palestinian acquaintance told me at midday. "And what happened? All I heard in French was 'terrorists, terrorists, terrorists'."

He was right. Almost all the reporting out of America was based on the accuracy of the "compelling evidence" - so "compelling" that we haven't been vouchsafed a clue as to what it is - that links Osama bin Laden to the ferocious bombings in Kenya and Tanzania. Several times yesterday, I had to interrupt live radio interviews to point out that the journalists in London and Washington were adopting the US government's claims without question.

The plots in which bin Laden is now supposed to have been involved, according to the Americans, are now taking on *Gone With the Wind* proportions. Bin Laden, we are told, was behind not only the US embassy bombings, but also the earlier bombing of US troops in Dhahran, anti-government violence in Egypt, the New York bombings (for which the culprits are all supposedly sentenced and jailed), and now - wait for it - an attempt to kill the Pope. Is this really conceivable? The fact that all this was taken at face value by so

many reporters probably says as much about the state of journalism as it does about American paranoia. The use of the word "terrorist" - where Arabs who murder the innocent are always called "terrorists" whereas Israeli killers who slaughter 29 Palestinians in a Hebron mosque or assassinate their prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, are called "extremists" - is only part of the problem. "Terrorist" is a word that avoids all meaning. The who and the how are of essential importance. But the "why" is something the West usually prefers to avoid. Not once yesterday - not in a single press statement, press conference or interview - did a US leader or diplomat explain why the enemies of America hate America. Why is bin Laden so angry with the United States? Why - not just who and how - but why did anyone commit the terrible atrocities in Africa?

Clearly, someone blew up the US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam. They may have been suicide bombers, but they must have known that they were slaughtering the innocent. Their deeds were wicked. But they were not, as one US diplomat called them, mindless. Whether or not bin Laden was involved, there was a reason for these dreadful deeds. And the reason almost certainly lies with US policy - or lack of policy - towards the Middle East. "How can America protect its embassies?" a US radio station asked me last week. When I suggested it could adopt fairer policies in the region, I was admonished for not answering a question about "terrorism".

For what really lies at the root of Arab reaction to the US attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan is that they come when America's word has never been so low; when the Arab sense of betrayal has never been greater. America's continued military presence in Saudi Arabia, its refusal to bring Israel to heel as it continues to build Jewish settlements on Arab land in violation of the Oslo agreement, its almost lip-smacking agreement to continue sanctions which are clearly culling the civilian population of Iraq - Arab fury at this catastrophe is one reason why a normally compassionate people responded with so little sympathy to the bombing of the US embassies. After all this, being lectured by Mr Clinton and then bombed by him was like getting a kick in the teeth from a man who has already stabbed you in the back.

Bin Laden or not, it is a fair and fearful bet that the embassy bombings were organised by - or at the least involved - Arabs. And the culprits should be found and brought to justice. But Cruise missiles do not represent due process, as Mr Clinton knows all too well. Talk of a massive "international terrorist conspiracy" is as exotic as the perennial Arab belief in the "international Zionist conspiracy". Bin Laden is protected in Afghanistan by the Taliban. But the Taliban are paid, armed and inspired by Saudi Arabia. And Saudi Arabia is supposed to be America's best friend in the Gulf, so close an ally that US troops are still stationed there (which is, of course, Mr bin Laden's grouse). Could it be that powerful people in Saudi Arabia, a fundamentalist and undemocratic state if ever there were one, support Mr bin Laden and share his desire for a "jihad" against America? This is one question the Americans should be asking.

Bin Laden himself was obsessed for many months with the massacre of Lebanese civilians by the Israelis at the UN base at Qana in southern Lebanon in April 1996. Why had Mr Clinton not condemned this "terrorist act", he asked? (In fact, Bill Clinton called it a "tragedy", as if it was some form of natural disaster - the Israelis said it was a "mistake" but the UN concluded it was not.)

Why had the perpetrators not been brought to justice, bin Laden wanted to know? It is odd now to compare bin Laden's words with those of Bill Clinton just 48 hours ago. They talked much the same language. And now their language has grown far more ferocious. "The United States wants peace, not conflict," Mr Clinton said. He is likely to find little peace in the Middle East for the rest of his presidency.



ROBERT FISK
Talk of an "international terrorist conspiracy" is as exotic as the Arab belief in the "Zionist conspiracy"

THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPH



Indian Tiger by Philip Meech
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MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD

The Omagh bomb • US missile attacks • President Clinton's confession • A-level results • Glenn Hoddle's book • The X-Files

US MISSILE ATTACKS

Reaction to yesterday's missile attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan in retaliation for terrorist bombings in Africa

THE WASHINGTON POST
US

THE UNITED States was correct to send its military forces into action against terrorist bases in Afghanistan and Sudan yesterday. The bombing two weeks ago of embassies in Kenya and Tanzania that killed more than 250 people and injured thousands more was an act of war. It is not the kind of war many Americans grew up with, in which one country invades another, but it is war nonetheless.

FINANCIAL TIMES
UK

THERE CAN be no denying that this is a gamble of considerable proportions for President Bill Clinton. Committing violence deep inside a distant state is not an action to be undertaken lightly. The risks are obvious: of something going militarily wrong; of a political backlash in the Islamic world; of an escalating war in which many more innocent lives are lost. The only question is whether the threat posed by the terrorists to US and international security is large and imminent enough to justify running such risks.

PHILADELPHIA INQUIRER
US

IT IS tempting, in light of President Clinton's fall from public grace earlier this week, to deduce that the strikes were planned as a powerful ploy to shift domestic opinion and shore up America's damaged reputation abroad. But Mr Clinton declared that the strikes were planned and executed for more important reasons and, this time, we must take him at his word.

CHICAGO TRIBUNE
US

LET'S BE sober about what has been achieved. Twelve years ago, the US launched a bombing raid on Libya. It succeeded in quieting Col Moammar Gadhafi for a time - but

he's still around, still a sponsor of world terrorism. The missile assault on bin Laden's operation may well chill his efforts for a time but won't reverse the course of terrorism. As for timing, for now we'll take on faith that the president's domestic troubles had no impact on this initiative. To think otherwise is chilling in itself.

THE GUARDIAN
UK

FOR MR Clinton the firm action against those who have taken American and other lives is a clear way of demonstrating that the institution of the US presidency is about much more than the first DNA test taken at the White House.

DAILY MAIL
UK

IN PROMOTING favourites Mr Blair has done nothing that many of his predecessors have not done: prime ministers have a natural urge to have those they know and trust about them. Indeed, this can make for effective government. But if pursued too relentlessly, cronyism can cocoon a leader from political reality and rob the government of talent. Mr Blair may not have crossed this line with his changes. Nonetheless, he has strayed close to it.

DETROIT NEWS CHRONICLE
US

AMERICA'S TERRORIST enemies do need to understand that America's domestic differences stop at the water's edge. When talk of impeachment was gathering strength during the Nixon administration in 1973, for example, a new Arab-Israeli war broke out, with the Soviet Union threatening to involve itself. Yet America rallied to Israel's defense. Likewise, this President's political and legal difficulties should not be read by others as a license to make America a target. The US, as a constitutional democracy, is bigger and more formidable than any one man, including the President himself.

Murdered for living in peace

THE BOSTON GLOBE
US

THE WORST terrorist attack in 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland gets its special horror from the indiscriminate nature of the killings. The town of Omagh, 50 miles west of Belfast, is a relatively integrated community, with Catholics and Protestants striving to live together. Both Catholics and Protestants voted for the political settlement approved resoundingly in May. Both Catholics and Protestants were killed by those who would undermine the settlement.

That is the outrage. The dead apparently were not targeted because they were perceived as oppressors or separatists or in retribution for other violence but simply because they lived in peace.

THE IRISH TIMES
Ireland

THE TWO governments are not immune from charges of tardiness. Perhaps after the pinnacle of the Agreement and the tensions of the Drumcree crisis an element of exhaustion or some loss of concentration came about. For what happened at Omagh was not unpredictable. The so-called "Real IRA" had already made six bombing attempts, of which the most recent was at Banbridge. Their murderous intent was clear and their capacity proven. There is nothing known about these people's intentions or capabilities which was not known before last Saturday.

It should not have taken the outrage at Omagh to mobilise the governments to action. The measures which are now to be taken - and they are almost certain to include new law - must be considered carefully and then put into place with speed and resolution.

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH
UK

IN ATTENDANCE at yesterday's funerals were Sinn Féin/IRA's Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, as though it was the most normal thing in the world. Instead of being chased from the burial ground, they have garnered further publicity. If the gun is for ever to be taken out of Irish politics,



THE BOMBING OF OMAGH

Opinions on the bombing by the Real IRA of a small market town, which left 28 dead and 330 injured.

then opprobrium must be heaped on all apologists for violence.

NEW STATESMAN
UK

ADAMS, MCGUINNESS and McLaughlin have taken their organisation a long way

from the strategy of bombing as many British and Protestants as possible; they are emulating themselves in a democratic politics which, now, means media politics and at least some degree of transparency. They are close to losing their mandate of blood and soul. The real test - of a spiritual as well as a political denunciation - has yet to be passed.

INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE
France

MAKE NO mistake about it: Ulster is a far sicker place than Germany was after a dozen years of Nazi power. Two hundred years of institutional bigotry have made sure of that. Unless Mr Blair and Mr Aherne roll up their sleeves, it will be hard to prevent this bleeding ulcer from contaminating life in the rest of Ireland and perhaps eventually in parts of Britain, too.

BELFAST TELEGRAPH
UK

THE MOST frustrating aspect of the Omagh bomb is that the authorities have evidently already established the identities of leading members of the Real IRA. In Northern Ireland, the eternal problem for the police has been to secure sufficient evidence to bring to justice those who were known to be behind various terrorist campaigns. Internment has been raised as an option, but it should be unnecessary to resort to a measure which has proved counter-productive and ineffective in the past.

The best means of ending the Real IRA's campaign is for the whole community to unite against this maverick organisation. The will of the people is the most effective weapon in a concerted drive against an organisation which has brought shame on Ireland.

THE IRISH NEWS
UK

THE ONLY way out of the abyss is via the Good Friday agreement. The need to work it has been strengthened by Omagh, not weakened. Sinn Féin and the Unionists will have to get around a table. The prisoner release programme will have to continue, despite the Paisleys, the Robinsons' and the Donaldsons' cheap shots at Mo Mowlam on the issue. The goal after Omagh must be the pursuit of justice, not vengeance, and, via the Belfast agreement, the achievement of a state of relationships within these islands wherein such a hideous catastrophe can never ever recur. (Tim Pat Coogan)

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CONFESSION

Comments following Bill Clinton's televised address in which he spoke of having had an 'inappropriate' relationship with Monica Lewinsky

THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD
Australia

AFTER PRESIDENT Clinton's extraordinary address to the American people, the most important question is whether it marks an end to something that has gone on far too long or the beginning of an even deeper descent into a debilitating political crisis. The US political system is a model of free and open democracy. But in this affair the central forces - the political parties, the media, the "moral majority" - within American democracy have produced a situation where the original cause is so out of proportion to its broad political effects, the world stands amazed.

LA REPUBBLICA
Italy

THE WHOLE world was in the Map Room with Clinton, and it wasn't looking for a marital

confession. It was looking for the proof of steadiness of nerves, critical competence, and intelligence. Or else, America would have wanted to see someone that, even by their tone of voice, realises the vastness of the disillusion to the public, even by asking: "Can I still govern?" In doing so, Clinton would have shown he understood the importance of this drama. None of these things happened. His four-minute address to the country was a sad and pathetic act from someone who thought he could lie and still easily get away with it.

EL PAIS
Spain

IT SEEMS to the American liberal establishment that Clinton has lost an opportunity to say sorry unambiguously, to acknowledge his guilt and appeal with contrition to the people's good sense. On the contrary, the President, in line with his personality, wanted to pay the

minimum political price for his indisputable error: "I didn't tell the whole truth, but I didn't lie." Only legalistic cynicism can reconcile these two proposals.

NEW YORK TIMES
US

HERE WAS a man of compassionate impulse and lofty ambition who went to Washington with every imaginable political skill except one. He seemed to think he was immune from a rule that leaps out from any reading of modern Presidential history. Everything comes to light sooner or later. Mr Clinton cannot stop the process of revelation in which he participated yesterday. By and by, we will see entire the lineaments of his fate and his standing among the Presidents. It can never be what he and the nation hoped, for he long ago chose to manipulate the narrative of his political life in such a way as to cripple trust.

A-LEVEL RESULTS

Verdicts on this year's A-level exam results, released on Thursday

THE SUN

THE A-LEVEL results are out and Britain's kids have done it again. Another record year for passes is a cause for celebration. We are delighted that all the hard work and dedication paid off for so many teenagers. And parents will be pleased that the money they invested in home computers has paid off, too. All those hours surfing the Web were educational after all!

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THE FACT is that subjects such as television studies and sport have no business masquerading as A-levels. They should be redesigned as vocational courses, and A-levels returned to being the purely academic qualifications they were originally designed as. All concerned, pupils and parents, schools and universities, would then know what each qualification was really worth. If A-levels are

ever to be restored to the undisputed status they previously enjoyed, we must first be clear as to what they stand for.

DAILY MAIL

WHAT OUGHT to be the "gold standard" of our school system has been eroded. This claim might have had some validity in other years. Not this time. The overall pass rate has gone up by an insignificant 0.2 per cent. Hardly galloping erosion. We congratulate all who have done well. And hope they go on to do even better.

THE EXPRESS

THERE IS still hope for those who think they have missed the mark. Of those who started as undergraduates last year, 54,401 gained their places through clearing. So even to those for whom this morning brings disappointment, the message must be: don't give up hope.

GLENN HODDLE'S BOOK ABOUT THE WORLD CUP

Comments on the England football coach's publication of a book detailing his conversations with players during the World Cup

SUNDAY MIRROR

HOW CAN Lancaster Gate now threaten anyone this season with bringing the game into disrepute after the revelations in Glenn Hoddle's new book? Chris Sutton, Gazza, Alex Ferguson and others were all slagged off by the current England coach in a book co-written with the FA's David Davies. He may have the title but a kiss-and-tell book while in office will hardly give him the respect of those playing under him. (Eamonn Holmes)

THE PEOPLE

WHAT A load of old tosh Glen Hoddle does talk. His memoirs of the World Cup are filled with paeans of praise for faith-healer Eileen Drewery - at one point he compares her to Christ - and he reckons that had she accompanied the England squad to France, the outcome would have been different. Really? So how come when David



Beckham consulted her about a problem with his calf, it ended up with an uncontrollable twitch? (Carol Sarler)

THE TIMES

HODDLE HAS prevailed, not by moral rightness but by the power of a good performance. It is the only way to acquire moral stature in a culture that looks to television for its moral lead. You can do anything you like, inappropriate, or flagrantly immoral, but if you can still look the

camera in the eye and put on a decent show, you will never lose. (Simon Barnes)

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

HODDLE MUST be naive to think the players might accept his invitation to tell him if they dislike the book. What Hoddle has inevitably lost is some dignity and trust which may undermine the Euro 2000 campaign. (David Miller)

THE EVENING STANDARD

YOUR COUNTRY needs you, Glenn Hoddle but it needs you most to win football matches. It doesn't need you to be a great author, diarist or instigator of protracted controversies. All we ask is that you win the matches that matter - like the ones against Romania and Argentina in France in June. (Michael Hart)

MISCELLANEOUS

Stories from around the world

THE POST
Zambia

EVEN THOUGH Zambia is a poor country which is now dependent on aims, certain minimum standards of self-respect ought to be observed. Such ceremonies as the hand-over of kitchen utensils at Lusaka Central Prisons yesterday are ridiculous, demeaning and troubling. They raise questions of whether the Zambian government is serious or has been seized by a particularly virulent form of mental paralysis. The utensils that the Swedes bought for the prison are highly appreciated, and Zambians have no right to be ungrateful. But they are items which the Ministry of Home Affairs can buy any day from its own resources even with the economic problems the country is going through.

KATMANDU POST
Nepal

DESPITE THE fact that Lord Gautam Buddha was born in Nepal, the truth has been overshadowed and Nepal has been unable to attract Buddhist tourists to this country. Over 500 million Buddhist people live in Asia alone. Japan, Thailand, Myanmar, Sri Lanka etc have a majority Buddhist population. Even taxi drivers in Thailand show great interest in Buddha.

DAILY YOMIURI
Japan

WHILE MANY young Japanese wish to get married, some tend to spend their twenties working and playing so hard that they have little time to find a partner. This may leave them wondering how to find a spouse

later in life. Japan Marriage System can provide a solution - a go-between service helping those who wish to find marriage partners. Changes in society mean that commercial matchmaking services are springing up alongside their traditional counterparts.

DAILY GLEANER
Jamaica

FEW PEOPLE have neutral feelings about the 1970s. In North America many people describe this period as an era of great excitement, that is, big afros, funky bell-bottom trousers, wide, high-heeled shoes; and rousing disco music. For others, it is a period best forgotten along with its outlandish fashions, loud annoying music and the little it offered by way of creative cultural ideas.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK

"For some people, sex is the main reason for going to work. I sometimes wondered whether any work was being done at all."

Jean Civil, a psychoanalyst who has spent seven years studying sex in the workplace

"It's fair to say this is not the best day of her life." Marsha Berry, Hillary Clinton's press secretary, on the day the President confessed his infidelity on TV

"In France we tried to make films like *The Full Monty*, but they were just boring. It was people on the dole eating soup."

Daniel Auteuil, French actor

"There are a lot of people in Sweden in my situation. I have to clean out my kidneys and liver, and they should do the same."

Ingvar Kamprad, founder of Ikea

"It is a place of indescribable grief - a land of shadow and appalling pain, for which there are no words." Shane Bradley, Bunceana parish priest, at a funeral for three child victims of the Omagh bombing

FILM OF THE WEEK

Reviews of the film version of 'The X-Files'

THE DAILY TELEGRAPH

THE X-FILES is more than passable fun, for all its modish millennial angst. Both stars look in their element on a soft screen - the low-key Duchovny, especially, looks as though he has a glowing future in movies. One could say the same for *The X-Files* itself, clearly positioned as a future franchise along the lines of *Star Trek* films (its ending hints none too gently at possible sequels). But things could be worse: did you really want to see *Godzilla II*? (David Gritten)

THE GUARDIAN

THE FILM'S influences lie somewhere between *All the*



aliens exist (though of course the audience is inclined to side with the believer heroes). The issue is that some people are open about their belief (or knowledge), and some people are covering it up. (Gaby Wood)

TIME OUT

WITH A narrative that's gone bonkers, you never know what's coming next, and there are a number of delicious surprises in store for the unwary. There's fun to have from the teaser storyline, and plenty of movie references to tick off, though the major mystery remains why the dark forces don't just shoot Mulder and Scully and be done with it. Guess that would harm a very obvious sequel opportunity. (Trevor Johnston)

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Something tells me I need to get out more

IT WAS Louis de Bernières who first raised the problem. We were on a stage together at the Hay-on-Wye Literary Festival and I had asked why he preferred foreign settings for his fiction. In a sustained, witty riff, de Bernières explained that he had never wanted to be the kind of writer who goes to university, emerges with an average English degree, works in a job where you have to wear a suit, gets married, has children and ends up writing novels filled with middle-class English characters.

The audience loved it. I was rather less amused. Short of providing my address, the names of my children and my VAT number, he had just described my life.

Since then a pattern has emerged. Some jock enragé of the Irvine Welsh/James Kelman school

sneers at the toffee-nosed, Oxbridge-educated literary establishment, and I know it's me. The *Independent's* columnist Bidisha takes a pop at the boys' club of writers, reviewers and publishers: I'm caught bang to rights again.

All the same, when the hip style novelist Christopher Fowler last week told *The Times's* Lottie Mogach that he was "terrified of that writers' thing, when you can tell from their references that they haven't left the house for years", I began to feel somewhat picked on.

No one, not even a Cambridge-educated member of the literary establishment, likes to be part of the one demographic group to which no fashionable writer wishes to belong. Besides, to be the despised member of a boys' club while also being fingered as the writer who never



TERENCE BLACKER

Who wants to be part of the one group to which no fashionable writer wishes to belong?

gets out seems peculiarly unfair. In such dark moments, I fix my mind on literary purists for whom

the word is all - Flaubert, Proust, Roth, Jeanette Winterson. I remind myself that E M Forster blamed his low output on having gone out too much. I recall Martin Amis's remark about how writing novels is precisely about not getting out of the house.

But, hell, he seems to get out of the house quite a bit. Philip Roth may work eight hours a day, seven days a week, but he still found time to develop a riotously dysfunctional relationship with Claire Bloom. That Winterson's no nun either.

It is a problem. Short of socially downgrading my childhood in the manner of Hanif Kureishi or subjecting my accent to a Ben Elton cockneyfication programme, there is little I can do about my background, upbringing or class. The only aspect of my life susceptible

to improvement would seem to be in the house-leaving area.

This is where Westminster City Council have come to my rescue. A group of dynamic librarians has decided to mark the National Year of Reading, which starts next month, by bringing books and writing into the community. The campaign will tie in with *The Word* - the world's greatest literature festival, taking place across London next March - and requires a writer-in-residence. I am deeply honoured.

Now, not only will I be getting out of the house, but I will be having a far more interesting time than Christopher Fowler with his silly parties at Soho House. My project is to roam the borough, appearing in unexpected places to discuss literary matters with the people of Westminster. Obviously I am not at

liberty to reveal our plans in detail, but I can give a broad-brush indication of our "placements".

Commuter trains. Targeting the Piccadilly and Circle Lines, I shall be stepping into carriages for three or four stops to provide passengers with impromptu readings from books ranging from *Middlemarch* to the short stories of Lorraine Hansberry. My audience will not be obliged to make contributions as they do to buskers, although brief literary critiques will be welcome.

Public toilets. Because graffiti are a valid art form, I shall be lurking in cubicles, popping out now and then to encourage consumers to enter Westminster's litter-free-on-the-wall contest. All they will be required to do is complete a verse starting with the line, "A chancer called Dame Shirley Porter..."

The sex industry. Taking advantage of the fact that Soho is within my parish, I shall step out from behind curtains or out of bedroom wardrobes and ask punters to explore with me, at no extra cost, the fascinating connection between creativity and the need to enact the flogging scene from *Mutiny on the Bounty* in a third-floor flat off Windmill Street.

The Bouncer Licensing Department. Security operatives are surprisingly keen readers. As they collect their official Bouncer Permit, I hope to be able to meet them and discuss matters of common literary interest. For those looking for a thumping good read, which can also have practical use in the course of their work, I shall be recommending *Captain Corelli's Mandolin*.

THE SATURDAY PROFILE

AUNG SAN SUU KYI

A Burmese lady not for turning

THIS WEEK, in a van blockaded on a bridge in Burma, a stranded woman sat in the heat, her eyes turning yellow from dehydration and jaundice, her blood pressure low, as she tried to reason with an entire army.

Aung San Suu Kyi, Burma's charismatic opposition leader, was taking her boldest steps yet with the ruling military. Twice during the past month, when Suu Kyi has attempted to meet her pro-democracy supporters in the provinces, her car has been blocked by soldiers several miles beyond Burma's capital, Rangoon.

Both occasions have resulted in an extraordinary standoff: Suu Kyi sitting in the heat for several days and nights, refusing to turn back. One story circulated that, with her customary resourcefulness, she caught rainwater in an opened umbrella when she ran out of water.

To take on the Burmese military - simply with words and tactics - requires determination and courage. After all, this is a regime that, since 1962, has ruined a country potentially one of Asia's richest - and repressed and even massacred its people in the process.

Yet quite apart from her steely will and charisma, Suu Kyi has an inheritance that is the stuff of legends: her father, Aung San, was the creator of modern Burma - and the Burmese army.

It would be difficult to over estimate the importance of Aung San in both the recent history of Burma (renamed Myanmar by the army in 1989), and in the Burmese national psyche. Looking like Yul Brynner, he was a quixotic figure who fought the British and the Japanese to secure Burma's independence.

In an 1984 essay on her father Suu Kyi wrote: "For the people of Burma, Aung San was the man who had come in their hour of need to restore their national pride and honour" - words that have a fitting resonance with her own situation today. Yet she never really knew him. He died when she was just two years old, assassinated with six members of his constituent cabinet by a political rival on the eve of independence in 1947.

Suu Kyi grew up surrounded by this legend: her father's face on every bank note, his picture hung in every school and most public buildings across the country.

She was one of three children in a family that suffered more than its share of tragedy. Her youngest brother drowned in a garden pond at the age of eight. Her surviving brother, Aung San U, lives in the US now, and according to recent rumour is being wooed by the military, who want him to return to Burma and oppose his sister.

It is possible Aung San himself envisaged a political future for at least one of his children. The fact that they were all named after him is significant - and extremely unusual, in Burma, where no family names. People acquire their names according to astrology, allowing little scope to reflect even kinship ties.

Aung San Suu Kyi's name, however, also incorporates an element of her mother's, Khin Kyi. She was a shrewd, robust woman, a deft mover herself in the field of Burmese politics.

Khin Kyi was a nurse when she met and married Aung San during the Japanese occupation. After his death she became in-

LIFE STORY

Origins: Born 19 June 1945, in Rangoon, capital of then Burma, now renamed Myanmar.

Vital statistics: Aged 53. Married to Michael Aris in 1972. Two sons, Alexander, 25, Kim, 22.

Influences: Her father, Aung San, a Burmese national hero who was assassinated when she was two years old.

Religion: Buddhist. Recently became a strict vegetarian.

Admires: India and Kipling.

Career: Student and teacher in politics until her mid-forties when she became opposition leader in her home country.

She says: "I would prefer not to remain in politics if I can avoid it."

Critics say: She could have struck up a constructive dialogue with government. Instead she chose the opposite.

Her gesture: Refusing to move from her car when stopped, or to eat until prisoners are released.

Their gesture: Sending her a beach umbrella (and a portable loo) as if she was on holiday.



creasingly involved in the government of the country and, among other social welfare appointments, served as minister of health. In 1960 she was appointed Burmese ambassador to India, and Suu Kyi left her convent school in Burma for Delhi: she was not to live in her own country again for 28 years.

After the coup which brought military rule to Burma (under General Ne Win) in 1962, Khin Kyi remained in Delhi. She retired shortly afterward and chose to distance herself from politics, living in semi-seclusion at her home on University Avenue in Rangoon. The same house in which, years later, Suu Kyi was held in enforced seclusion under house arrest.

Suu Kyi, meanwhile, finished her school education in Delhi then entered Oxford where she studied PPE at St Hugh's College. It was the Swinging Sixties, but her student days were full of genteel propriety: she drank alcohol just once, and worked

hard. No stranger to the world of politics, she later worked for the UN in New York. In 1972 she married a British academic, Michael Aris (now a specialist in the study of Tibetan peoples). The couple had met as students in the mid-Sixties through Suu Kyi's guardians in England, the Gore-Booth family (the late Lord Gore-Booth was British ambassador in Burma during the Fifties and British High Commissioner in India during the Sixties). From 1972 until 1988, Suu Kyi's life revolved largely around academia and motherhood, punctuated by visits back to Burma.

At first she joined her husband in Bhutan where he was employed by the government of the tiny Himalayan kingdom. The new family later settled in Oxford - where Suu Kyi studied and worked in the oriental department at the Bodleian Library. During the Eighties she became a visiting scholar at Kyoto University in Japan, but in 1988 - as she was about to commence her postgraduate thesis at London's School of Oriental and African Studies when her mother suffered a stroke. Suu Kyi rushed to Burma, and has never left the country since, knowing she would be unable to return. A striking antithesis to conventional exile.

In Rangoon that summer she nursed her mother against a backdrop of mounting political tension. In August a national strike was declared and the military government was forced to step down. Her mother survived for several months, but Khin Kyi was only dimly aware of Burma's mass movement for democracy and the bloodshed and violence with which it was crushed. She died in December 1988, after the military had resumed control.

Suu Kyi, meanwhile, found herself thrust into the limelight by her father's name. Outwardly, her entrance into Burmese politics was as sudden as it was dramatic. But she has always hinted that she had an inkling it might happen - and when she married she made her husband promise that he would not stand in her way if she felt she had to return to Burma.

Ten years ago this week, she made her first public appearance. Half a million people turned up at the Shwedagon Pagoda in Rangoon to hear Aung San's daughter. "People have been saying... that I know nothing of Burmese politics. The trouble is I know too much. My family knows best how complicated and tricky Burmese politics can be and how much my father had to suffer on this account," she said. The crowd's applause was deafening.

With a number of disabused ex-military officers she formed the NLD - one of hundreds of political parties launched when the military agreed to a general election. She embarked on a tireless campaigning trail, taking the message of democracy across Burma despite a ban on gatherings of more than five people.

The NLD quickly became the most popular party in Burma, and people flocked to hear Suu Kyi, while the military did their



Aung San Suu Kyi: her father's daughter, her mother's charm

AP

utmost to blacken her name - making particularly invidious remarks about her marriage to a foreigner. And, shortly after she publicly criticised General Ne Win (who by then had retired but remained a shadowy influence). Shortly afterwards, on 20 July 1989, she was arrested and placed under custody in her own home.

During the six years of her house arrest, hundreds of fellow NLD members were given jail sentences; her party won the general election overwhelmingly; and she was awarded the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize.

When she was freed in July 1995, the mood was electrifying - both within Burma and throughout the world beyond. No one doubted that the struggle for democracy would continue to be rough going, but the expectations were that Suu Kyi's release heralded a new dawn for the 50 million people of Burma.

Since her release she has faced enormous problems with cheerful resilience - not least of those difficulties is that for eight years the military has refused to honour the elections that should have brought the NLD to power. Recently there has been much concern about the state of her health: she is now 53, and the constant struggles of the last 10 years have taken their toll.

It has also been tough going rebuilding

her shattered party in the face of Military Intelligence spies. And despite the omnipresent soldiers posted at her gate, until November last year she held weekend meetings for her supporters. She would stand on a podium behind her garden gate speaking to thousands who braved the risk of imprisonment by gathering in the road outside her house.

Her speeches took on a flavour of Gandhi, and dwelt on moral issues rather than following a party political agenda. She also frequently had the crowds in stitches: when speaking in Burmese (a tonal language which allows much scope for puns) Suu Kyi's sense of humour becomes especially apparent. But the meetings became impossible to hold when the military blocked the road in order to prevent what they described as "unrest".

Meanwhile the junta has persistently refused to commence a dialogue with her. She has been stymied at every turn. So much so that recently a few of her frustrated supporters have questioned her tactics. Some of the most poignant words have come from her former aide, Ma Thanegi, who herself spent three years in Burma's notorious Insein Prison and in February this year wrote in the *Far Eastern Economic Review*: "Aung San Suu Kyi's approach has been

highly moral and uncompromising, catching the imagination of the outside world. Unfortunately it has come at a real price for the rest of us."

Other supporters have been particularly concerned over her insistence that she should be present at any meeting between the NLD and the military although Khin Nyunt, head of Military Intelligence, has at times been willing to start dialogue with other party members. Some even question her call on foreign governments to impose sanctions on Burma (the US imposed investment sanctions on the country in April last year). But for her this is one of the fundamental issues: "What we want are the kind of sanctions that will make it quite clear that economic change in Burma is not possible without political change," she said in a video smuggled out to the European Parliament.

Meanwhile her personal communications also remain difficult. Suu Kyi's husband has not been granted a Burmese visa since Christmas 1995. The last family member she saw was her youngest son who was allowed a visit last autumn. It is an enormous personal sacrifice that she has made - will Burma prove worthy of it?

HARRIET O'BRIEN

ACCIDENTAL HEROES OF THE 20TH CENTURY

2: DUSTY SPRINGFIELD, SINGER

WE FIRST saw her in a gingham dress, like something out of *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers*, full-bosomed, with a pinched-in waist, with her improbable hair back-combed and perched upon her head like a blond Walnut Whip.

Who could have guessed that this Barbie doll, singing trouble-free country songs with her brother Tom in 1962 in a terminally cheerful combo called The Springfielders, would become the great tragic heroine of pop music?

Forget Marianne Faithfull. Any of them take drugs and sleep with Mick Jagger. Stifle a yawn as you rehearse the Janis Joplin story. Sex and drugs and rock'n'roll and an early death. But Dusty. Ah, Dusty. Now that would make a movie.

We start in the present day with our heroine living semi-reclusively in England's leafy Home Counties. Requests for interviews are mostly turned down. Occasionally a snapper with a telephoto lens tries to catch her going out to empty the rubbish. It's sort of Gloria Swanson in *Sunset Boulevard*. It wasn't Dusty that got small, it was the records.

Now flash back to the beginning, and a mystery unfolds. How did a middle-class girl born in Hampstead become one of the greatest voices in the history of soul music?

Mary Isobel Catherine Bernadette O'Brien, born in 1939 to an income tax consultant and what Dusty describes as a "pure innocent Irish Catholic" mother, somehow transcended the sub-country music that

could be considered a young red-headed Irish girl's spiritual home, went solo, and, by the late Sixties, had Jerry Wexler, Aretha Franklin's producer, itching to record with her.

Dusty in *Memphis*, the album Wexler and Dusty recorded, was described by the *New York Times* as "pop music's holy grail". It is one of the most famous pop albums of all time, more heard of than heard, although the hit single it yielded, "Son

of a Preacher Man", revived most recently in *Pulp Fiction*, never pales. The single was final confirmation not only that the girl had gone from Hampstead but that all trace of Hampstead had gone from the girl.

Dusty was always more interesting than her records, though. In the mid-Sixties, the music critic Simon Frith noted, "Dusty was the object of an oddly furtive adolescent interest. Her image, like her hair,

was brittle... Her songs hinted at unspoken, desperate truths about sexuality that weren't there for discussion by little boys."

The sex thing, of course. Dusty has said she is as capable of "being swayed by a girl as a boy", and less prurient speculation drove her from Britain in the early Seventies. She settled in California, and for a decade and a half rattled about in a big house with a big swimming-pool, drinking, taking uppers and downers, doing the American supper-club circuit, and releasing mostly unworthy records.

Until the story takes another glorious twist in 1987, when Neil Tennant, a long-time fan and smart fellow, brings Dusty home to record with the Pet Shop Boys. Miracul-

ously, the voice is intact, "husky and breathy," says Tennant, "with an intensity and desperation that's fantastically sensual."

In the midst of Dusty's glorious late flowering, though, breast cancer is diagnosed, a blight she is determined to defeat.

If anyone can, Dusty can. In 1964 - 1964, mind you, when blonde pop stars were for amusement only - Dusty was placed under arrest in her hotel in South Africa after refusing to perform for segregated audiences. She always has had a reputation for being "difficult", arising mainly from her unerring views on what makes a good pop record.

Difficult? Sure, she's difficult. If you want simple, make a film about Kylie Minogue.



THE WEEKLY MUSE

BY MARTIN NEWELL



As August turned the meadows
To pre-autumnal hues
In quiet west country woodland
Some badgers watched the news
"They'll gas twelve thousand of us
Within the next five years
What kind of bastards are they?"
A brock broke down in tears.
His older wiser comrade
Who'd seen it all before
Said, "Courage Badger, courage.
The public who abhor
Our slaughter in such numbers
Are bound to make a stink
And anyway our killers
Are busy with those mink."

Meanwhile in rural Suffolk
A sculptor won five grand
For eighteen rotten elm trees
Displayed on grazing land
The Arts Council assessor
Awarding him the sum
Was cornered by a farmer
Who beckoned him to come:
"Yew reck'n yew know aart, boy?
Wal' I wun't disagree...
I've got this pile o' cowshit
Per'aps yew'd like t'see..."

With Torrington, James Kelman
And Irvine Welsh dismissed
By Donald Dewar, denouncing
Their books as "workerist"
One wonders how that yobbo
Called Burns, behind the plough
Who wrote in lowland dialect
Would fare with Dewar now.

The Cabinet's full of dunces
Clare Short is in the frame
Chris Smith, Nick Brown are others.
Or that's what Mensa claim
For Mensa can assess you
But should you be in doubt
They'll put you in the picture
(The Sun will take you out).

More tension in the White House
The President in shock
His questioner relentless
The press outside on blar:
"The actual words I used sir,"
Claimed Clinton from the dock.
"Were: Hold my calls, Lewinsky
And: Will you set my clock?"

THE WEASEL

How I skilfully took advantage of a poisoned leg to alter the course of hospital ward conversations about car boot sales



At least he'll have no trouble finding something to write about this week," our Yorkshire neighbours pointed out to Mrs Weasel as she dashed round buying grapes and orange juice for me. Yet, curmudgeon that I am, I failed to acknowledge my great good fortune as I lay flat as a flounder in hospital.

My mysterious malady made its presence felt on the third day of our month-long stay in Weasel Villas North on the Yorkshire coast. After a sudden fever, my left leg swelled grotesquely and turned an impressive range of shades from both the red and the violet ends of the spectrum. It may have been an adverse reaction to an insect bite (not that I felt anything) on our first night here, when I had been pressing-ganged into attending an evening concert of clichéd classics (Pachelbel's Canon, Vivaldi's Four Seasons etc) in a cowpat-studded pasture near a local stately home. An alternative possibility suggested by our GP was a jellyfish sting, rather like the terrible maritime killer that nearly did for Sherlock Holmes in "The Lion's Mane" ("Cyanea capillata is the miscreant's full name and he can be as dangerous and far more painful than the cobra..."). Unfortunately for this hypothesis, I had not dipped so much as a toe in the North Sea.

When penicillin failed to do its stuff, I found myself reclining in the diesel-rich atmosphere of an elderly ambulance en route for the hospital. My first billet was a geriatric ward, due to be closed in a few days. It proved to be an

unexpectedly lively environment. One of my neighbours in the four-bed ward was an old chap who, though rather deaf, thought life was no fun without a bit of noise going on. After an evening of the telly going full blast, when I had ample opportunity to discover the puerile gormlessness that passes for peak-time viewing on ITV, he was induced to switch off at 10pm, after which he treated us to an hour of Seventies disco classics on Radio 2. When he finally switched off, I was able to enjoy the mild, unconvincing hallucinations projected on my eyelids. The elaborate carvings of a medieval Bavarian village would suddenly become animated, with gryphons slowly twisting their necks and gargoyles leering. An outcrop of glistening fungi would flourish, mature and deliquesce in a matter of moments. In the morning, I saw an attractive blonde nurse puffing up an inflatable man. However, this turned out to be no hallucination. Discovered in the course of clearing out a cupboard, this startling novelty was installed in the lavatory, where it alarmed a succession of visitors.

Thankfully, my noisy neighbour departed after one night and my evenings were punctuated by nothing more onerous than the decision whether to have Horlicks or Ovaltine. Though the quality of nursing care was excellent, my encounters with doctors were both spasmodic and uninformative.

On my second day, I was aroused from woozy lethargy by a bearded fellow who suddenly popped up at my bedside. Accompanied by a retinue of junior doctors, he machine-gunned

me with questions. It took a moment or two to twig that this was a consultant making a rare appearance at my bedside. I felt somewhat akin to being a specimen in a bottle as he muttered technicalities to his note-taking entourage. With a final observation about the blotches on my leg ("interesting distribution"), he disappeared in a swirl of white coats and stethoscopes, leaving his patient none the wiser. The appearance of my afflicted limb was a



topic of much interest in the ward, though the staff did not always display the tactfulness you might expect. "Oooh!" exclaimed a cleaner, as she peered in horrified fascination. "Don't mind me, I'm always a bit nosy."

Both my visions and my leg steadily deflated under a massive onslaught of intravenous antibiotics. Bed-bound, I found myself subject to the tedious dictatorship of the excretory functions. On the plus side, I regained my appetite. The standard of the hospital food was certainly equal to the better

class of pub, though the more exotic dishes caused certain problems in the geriatric ward. Before one meal, I heard the nurses bellowing "DO YOU WANT CHICKEN CHASSEUR OR LAMB HARICOTT?" to the utter bewilderment of their elderly patients.

As closure of this section approached, I was removed to an eight-bed recovery ward. This was not without drawbacks, since I became the immobile target of compulsive conversationalists. I learnt, for example, the benefits of car boot sales if you happen to be stocking a garden pond ("I got a forty quid pump for 35p"), how the port of Whitby coped with the bad winter of 1947 ("We made briquettes by mixing cement with coal dust") and the advantages of having a time-share property in Santa Monica. Realising that insanity might be added to my on-going medical problems if this state of affairs continued, I decided to take matters into my own hands. By initiating topics myself, I was able to ensure that gastronomy came to the forefront of ward chat.

The relative merits of kippers au naturel and the boil-in-the-bag variety kept us occupied for the best part of a morning, and a heated exchange about whether potatoes were better peeled or boiled in their skins proved equally stimulating. Much comment ensued when Mrs W augmented my supper with a fresh boiled lobster and mayonnaise. Undoubtedly, however, the most fruitful topic of conversation was not about munching but monarchy. In particular, HM the Queen Mother, pro or con? I'm pleased to report that an

on-the-spot poll of everyone who entered the ward that morning (consultants excluded) revealed a distinct republican bias.

As blessed mobility returned, I learnt of picturesque treatments that I did not feel too dismayed to have avoided. "That linen cupboard near the door," a ward sister indicated, "was where we used to keep the leech bin." Apparently, the little suckers are still used following plastic surgery. Another unexpected cure was mentioned by the tissue viability nurse, a willowy blonde whom I rather fell for. Sadly, she only had eyes for my leg. It was doing fine, she said, no need for "larva therapy". A nursing colleague laughed, since this turned out to be a medical euphemism for maggots. They do wonders, I was told, in the antiseptic removal of dead tissue. Best of all, when they've eaten it up, they eat each other. The excellent results in a recent case prompted Ms Tissue Viability to keep a photographic record.

"I never thought a thing about it," she recalled, "but I got some very funny looks in Boots when I went to pick up the prints."

After I'd spent 12 days in chokes, a spunky young female doctor took pity on me (it's possible that she couldn't stand touring a ward that was riven with disputes about kippers, spuds and monarchs) and waylaid the galloping specialist for long enough to secure my release.

The cause of my incarceration remains unexplained, but one thing is for certain. I'm going to avoid Vivaldi like the plague from now on.

SPIRIT OF THE AGE

PAUL VALLELY

Breaking out of tribal ghettos

SPLASHING NOISILY up the river, waist-deep in water, the group of aboriginal young women in their gaudy red and orange caprioles and grey wetsuits looked like any bunch of students on an adventure holiday. But they were not. The giggling group consisted of individuals from the hard-line areas on either side of Northern Ireland's sectarian divide. Most of them, until a few days before, had rarely ventured outside the clan enclaves in which they live. Almost all had never once met someone from the other side.

Now there they were helping each other out of a river in the rural glens of County Antrim, pulling off each other's Wellingtons and sharing the few cigarettes which had not been soaked. Ulster is no place for facile optimism. And yet it is an antidote, of kinds, to the bomb in Omagh that throughout the province there are some 133 peace and reconciliation groups, quietly going about the painstaking daily task of rebuilding the trust so brutally shattered.

Perhaps the seminal influence on these groups is the Corrymeela Community, which aims to create a safe space in which Catholics and Protestants can meet - most particularly residents of border "interface areas".

It works. "I thought I'd be frightened here, but nobody cares whether you're a Catholic or a Protestant," said 16-year-old Lisa Bradley. She spoke with amazement at having discovered what those of us who have grown up inside such tribal ghettos take for granted.

Corrymeela was opened more than 30 years ago on the wave of energy and openness which characterised the Sixties. But the idea had its roots in the prisoner-of-war camp experience of a Presbyterian minister called Ray Davey. Two things formed it - his attempts to build a sense of community among all ranks by getting soldiers together to swap life-histories and his harrowing experiences in a work-gang clearing bodies from the ruins of Dresden, where Allied firebombs had fried 50,000 people and disabused Davey of the notion that his own side had a monopoly on honour and virtue.

For the past three decades, the 180 strong Corrymeela Community, which embraces Christians of all denominations, has brought together around 3,000 people a year to exchange their stories. "Story takes you out of the arena where people lay claim to absolute truth," says the centre's current director, Colin Craig. Views of history are acknowledged as partial and subjective. "Then something new becomes possible."

It does not go for easy targets. Last week was typical. The centre housed three groups, each containing both Catholics and Protestants. One was of cases on the books of the NSPCC. Another was a lone-parent family support group. The third was a group from both sides of the border which mixed teenage girls from the Travellers' community with others from settled homes. But it also has a safe house for fam-

ilies fleeing from paramilitaries and deals with riskier groups. A soldier injured in an IRA explosion was brought together recently with a group of Republican prisoners' families. And when the centre's social workers learned that police were planning to swoop on a group of troublesome Protestant youths who were constantly rioting, they brought the two groups together.

"There were the 16 riot ringleaders, six police and six loyalist community workers," said Colin Craig. "The atmosphere was stinging." Craig put them through a series of physical exercises. "They had to touch each other. Then we divided them into three teams - with police, youths and former-paramilitaries in each - and had a Capture the Flag game. It was odd to see them crawl through the woods, pooling their street skills."

The subsequent discussions between the three groups took on a different tone. One of the things which arose was that when the police arrived on the scene of a brewing riot, their helmets and body armour made them a target. Some weeks later, the police were called to a simmering scene in their armoured landrovers. One of the officers, to the horror of his sectional commander, got out of the vehicle, took off his helmet and went over to two of the youths he'd met at Corrymeela and said: "Billy are we gonna do this?" The youth replied: "I'll see what I can do," and went off to talk to his peers. Moments later the riot dissolved.



The Derry peace statue

Brian Harris

But failure is also part of the everyday. Peacemaking is no soft option, as the plaque on Corrymeela's children's playground reveals. It is dedicated to the memory of Sean Armstrong, a cross-community worker killed by paramilitaries. And among the participants last week was one woman whose husband was shot more than 20 years ago, but - with her pain re-triggered by the Omagh bomb - was unable to bring herself to talk about it even now.

So the work of places like Corrymeela goes on, developing ever more sophisticated mechanisms for addressing the prejudice which it insists resides in group dynamics rather than in individuals. And disguising it all in activity holidays which allowed jaded and jaundiced adults to rediscover

something child-like in themselves. "It has been great fun. When we first came, we were suspicious of the other side; many had never ever met anyone who was of a different religion; by the end of the week we were all kissing and hugging and crying," said Matt Harkin, a lone parent from Derry.

That night, the participants all retired to the pub in Ballycastle. High on the wall above them, a muted television set showed the funerals that had taken place that day in Omagh. Beneath the screen, the Catholic and Protestant drinkers laughed and joked with boisterous good humour. There was no disrespect in their behaviour. It was just that the ghost of the terrible past was giving way to the possibility of a different future.

DAYS LIKE THESE

22 AUGUST, 1939

CHIPS CHANNON
writes in his diary

"A historic day. I feel that a new era, perhaps the last, has opened for England and incidentally for me. It began this quiet, sunlit morning when I sleepily opened the newspaper and read emblazoned across the ever-sensational Express 'German Russian Pact'. Then I realised that the Russians have double-crossed us, as I always believed they would. They have been coquetting secretly with Germany, even as our negotiations proceeded. They are the foulest people on earth. Now it looks like war and the immediate partition of Poland."

24 AUGUST, AD79

PLINY THE YOUNGER
watches the eruption of Vesuvius which buried Pompeii

"My uncle was stationed at Misenum, in active command of the fleet. In the afternoon my mother drew his attention



made ready. As he was leaving the house he was handed a message from Rectina, wife of Tassus whose house was at the foot of the mountain. She was terrified and implored him to rescue her. He changed his plans, and what had begun in a spirit of inquiry he completed as a hero."

24 AUGUST, 1830

FRANCES ANN KEMBLE,
daughter of actor Charles
Kemble writes in her diary
on the opening of
the Liverpool-Manchester
railway

"We were introduced to the little engine which was to drag us along the rails. This snorting little animal, which I felt rather inclined to pat, was then harnessed to our carriage, and Mr Stephenson having taken me on the bench of the engine with him, we started at about ten miles an hour. You can't imagine how strange it seemed to be, without any visible cause of progress other than the magical machine, with its flying white breath."

I have never been a quitter...

CLASSIC
PODIUM

From the televised address
to the American people
announcing his resignation
by Richard Milhous Nixon,
37th President of the
United States
(8 AUGUST, 1974)

time with the problems we face at home and abroad.

To continue to fight through the months ahead for my personal vindication would almost totally absorb the time and attention of both the President and Congress in a period when our entire focus should be on the great issues of peace abroad and prosperity without inflation at home.

Therefore, I shall resign the presidency effective at noon tomorrow. Vice-President Ford will be sworn in as President at that hour in this office.

As I recall the high hopes for America with which we began this second term, I feel a great sadness that I will not be here in this office working on your behalf to achieve those hopes in the next two-and-one-half years. But in turning over direction of the government to Vice-President Ford, I know that the leadership of America will be in good hands. In passing this office to the Vice-President, I also do so with the profound sense of the weight of responsibility that will fall on his shoulders tomorrow.

As he assumes that responsibility, he will deserve the help and support of all of us. The first essential is to begin healing the wounds of this nation; to put the bitterness and divisions of the recent past behind us and to rediscover those shared ideals that lie at the heart of our strength and unity.

By taking this action, I hope that I will have hastened the start of that process of healing which is so desperately needed in America.

I regret deeply any injuries that may have been done in the course of the events that led to this decision. I would say only that if some of my judgements were wrong, and some were wrong, they were made in what I believed at the time to be the best in-

terest of the nation. To those who have stood with me during these past difficult months, to my family, my friends, to many others who joined in supporting my cause because they believed it was right, I will be eternally grateful for your support.

And to those who have not felt able to give me your support, let me say I leave with no bitterness toward those who have opposed me, because all of us, in the final analysis, have been concerned with the good of the country however our judgements might differ.

For more than a quarter of a century in public life I have shared in the turbulent history of this era. I have fought for what I believed in. Sometimes I have succeeded and sometimes I have failed, but always I have taken heart from what Theodore Roosevelt once said about the man in the arena, "whose face is marked by dust and sweat and blood, who strives valiantly, who errs and comes short again and again because there is not effort without error and shortcoming, but who... at the best knows in the end the triumphs of high achievements and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly."

To have served in this office is to have felt a very personal sense of kinship with each and every American. In leaving it, I do so with this prayer: May God's grace be with you in all the days ahead.

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

At least the Cold War kept the terrorists at bay



CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN

The United States is by far the greatest power on earth. But it is remarkably timorous and fragile

The world is now, in many ways and many places, more dangerous than it was at the height of the Cold War. We have just seen one dramatic illustration of this with the sudden American air attack on Afghanistan and Sudan.

In earlier times, the existence of "mutually assured destruction" ensured a kind of tense stability, with much sparring over contested zones. Only once - over Korea in the mid-century - did a serious and prolonged conflict between major powers break out. This was due to an ambiguous signal sent out from the United States, misinterpreted by Stalin as meaning that the US would not go to war over South Korea, so that his own protectorate of North Korea could invade South Korea with impunity.

This was an expensive lesson for both superpowers, and both soon developed more sophisticated techniques for the avoidance of direct conflict. Both superpowers made ingenious use of the United Nations for this end. Thus, in 1957, over the crisis in Hungary, President Eisenhower used the United Nations to get out of a trap which his own propaganda had constructed for him. For years the US Government had been promising to "roll back the Iron Curtain".

Unfortunately, this language was used in broadcasts to Eastern Europe, mainly through Radio Free Europe. The broadcasts were taken as implying that if any Eastern Europeans revolted against the Soviet Union, they would have military support from the United States. Believing this, Imre Nagy, Prime Minister of Hungary, decided to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, thus presenting a direct challenge to the Soviet Union.

There thus emerged a serious risk of conflict between the US and the Soviet Union. Eisenhower saw that a war between the two superpowers in Central Europe would be a huge disaster, involving enormous casualties, including American casualties. But how to get out of the terrible trap constructed by his own past rhetoric?

Eisenhower decided to use the United Nations for this purpose. He claimed that the United States was bound by international obligations, specifically the Charter of the UN, not to intervene unilaterally and could only act through the United Nations. This was quite false. There is nothing in the Charter to prevent any power from acting unilaterally, or in concert with others, if it considers its vital interests are at stake. But to put the spotlight on the UN, and away from the United States, enabled Eisenhower to pass the buck in a dignified manner.

So the matter came, in the first instance, before the Security Council. There, altogether predictably, the Soviet Union vetoed UN intervention. The matter then came before the General Assembly, where the United States at that time controlled a safe two-thirds of the vote. The United States welcomed the verdict of what it then still called "the moral conscience of mankind" represented by the General Assembly.

In the upshot, the Soviet Union got away with invading Hungary, and the United States got away with letting down the Hungarians.

After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the United Nations lost the kind of relevance it had had while there were still two great powers. President Bush did make some use of the UN during the Gulf



A fireman cradles a small victim of the Oklahoma terrorist bombing of 1996

Associated Press

War, but it was mainly a way of lending some international dignity and decorum to the motley consortium of allies, brought together by Saddam Hussain's expansionist aggression.

The United States is now by far the greatest power on earth. But it is - and is - remarkably timorous and fragile for a power able to draw on such stupendous resources. At least twice it has been forced to back away in the face of aggression from almost ridiculously diminutive adversaries. Thus, Ronald Reagan backed out of Lebanon after a guerrilla gang, backed by Syria, had inflicted heavy casualties on a detachment of American marines. Similarly, Bill Clinton, having adopted an apparently militant position in Somalia, abruptly backed away after smaller casualties had been inflicted on American forces there. By now, even very small countries facing potential conflicts with the Americans know that the worst they have to fear is aerial bombardment, as in this week's attacks on Afghanistan and Sudan. Ground forces will probably not be sent in at all and, if sent in, will be withdrawn at the first sign of serious trouble.

Not only does this condition give relatively small countries with aggressive propensities - such as Iran, Iraq and Syria - unprecedented freedom of action. It also encourages paramilitary groups, even quite tiny ones, in the belief that they can make progress towards their objectives by a judicious mixture of violence, threats and political negotiation. Not only does the United States respond in a promising manner - from the point of view of the terrorists - but other powers do also, including Britain.

The terrorist group which has made the most skilful use of this situation is - not surprisingly - the oldest terrorist group in continuous existence: the IRA, with its seasoned and resourceful political arm, Sinn Féin.

What is going on, within the present British Government in relation to Sinn Féin-IRA, is in many ways, but not in all, closely similar to what went on within the government of Neville Chamberlain from 1936 to 1939 in relation to Adolf Hitler. What was going on under Chamberlain has gone down in history as "appeasement". Today, in relation to Sinn Féin-IRA, appeasement passes under the even more euphemistic name of "the peace process".

In both cases, a party threatening violence was rewarded. But, in the case of Chamberlain and Hitler, the appeasement of the potential aggressor was much more understandable - if not defensible - than is now the case in relation to Sinn Féin-IRA. What Chamberlain was trying to avert, however foolishly, was the risk of a war with what had then become the world's greatest military power. The present British Government - and the Irish Government also - are almost frantically seeking to appease a motley collection of a few hundred terrorists.

Appeasement was not a success in the Thirties, and is not a success now, in its present "peace process" garb. The "success" of the peace process in the Good Friday Agreement was almost frantically celebrated at the time in a torrent of media guff about the supposed advent of peace on earth. The guff ignored among other obvious realities the fact that while Sinn Féin, the political wing controlling no

weapons at all, endorsed the peace agreement, the IRA, in control of all the weaponry, quietly indicated that while it had no objection to whatever Sinn Féin might choose to sign up to, it did not regard Sinn Féin's signature as in any way binding on the IRA.

Last week's bombing at Omagh was the most destructive act of terrorist violence since the foundation of the Irish Free State 77 years ago. Formally, the Omagh bombing was not the work of the Provisionals but of a "breakaway" group calling itself "the Real IRA". But such "breakaways" are too convenient to be accepted at face-value. It is doubtful whether any terrorist attack could be planned and carried out in a place like Omagh without some collusion on the part of the local Provisionals. Both the personnel and the weapons involved derive from the IRA, and the event is in line with the IRA's purposes and procedures.

While the IRA's own ceasefire holds, Sinn Féin, acting for the IRA, enjoys widespread international approval and un- easy respect. That is precisely the combination - with an emphasis on the "un- easy" - that it has hoped to achieve. After Omagh, for which, incredibly, almost nobody accuses it any degree of blame, this combination is enhanced. Sinn Féin, with the Provisional IRA along right behind it, fully armed, is seen as acting "responsibly", unlike the vile murderers calling themselves "the Real IRA". And when the peace talks resume in the autumn, Sinn Féin will expect to be rewarded for good behaviour. On past form, it will receive its rewards in such shapes as the "reform" of the RUC, to the specifications of the people who have murdered

nearly 300 members of that force, over the past 25 years.

This month saw, I believe, the worst terrorist outrages since the Second World War. The bomb toll at Omagh was the worst in these islands over that period. The bombings of the US Embassies in Nairobi and Tanzania, which killed a total of 257 people, mainly in Nairobi, were the worst in the world.

What hope is there of combating terrorism effectively? As far as the Arab and Muslim countries principally affected are concerned, I can see little immediate hope. There are a large number of terrorist organisations involved, with covert backing from several Arab or Muslim countries, the most active and ingenious being Syria. There is widespread public support in these countries for terrorist activities, especially when directed against Israeli or American targets. In addition, there are many religious fanatics who believe that persons who die in the course of attacks on infidels will go immediately to Paradise.

In the circumstances, American efforts to combat terrorism can easily become counter-productive. Americans cannot rely on local people to combat terrorism, with which these people are usually in at least some degree of covert sympathy. At present, Americans are going in there, in response to the pressures of public opinion at home, and trying to do the job for themselves. But they are singularly ill-equipped to do this. They generally do not understand either the language or the culture with which they have to deal. Those sent there on these missions are likely to become targets of those whom they were sent to expose and defeat. And, when they do become targets, Americans are likely to withdraw from the areas precipitately, as before, leaving the terrorists more entrenched than ever.

It would be better to withdraw from the affected areas as soon as possible, and in as good order. The countries involved could then be isolated, in terms of trade and aid, and informed that these will only be restored if the countries concerned deal adequately with the terrorist organisations they have been harbouring. There is no guarantee that this approach would work, but nothing more promising appears to be on offer.

Middle Eastern terrorism will be a hard nut to crack, if ever it is cracked. Other kinds of terrorism would be a lot easier to crack, if governments only can find the will to clamp down on them effectively. Irish terrorism is a case in point. Most Irish people, North and South, do not approve of terrorism, but are afraid of terrorists. The terrorists are few in number, and the most experienced are well known to the police. They cannot be dealt with effectively in the course of normal policing, and judicial process, mainly because witnesses are understandably afraid to come forward.

In the circumstances, this means that terrorism cannot be combated without the resolute and impartial application of internment. A myth has been allowed to establish itself, according to which "internment has been tried and failed" and proponents of this myth were heard from again this week. Internment has been tried on three occasions in Ireland since the start of the Second World War. It was used successfully against the IRA by Eamon de Valera during that war, when the IRA regarded themselves as allies of Nazi Germany, and this threatened de Valera's policy of Irish neutrality. It was used, again successfully, by Sean Lemass in the late Sixties, when the IRA attempted to wage "war" on Northern Ireland from bases in the Republic.

There are some signs this week, after Omagh, that things may at last be moving in that benign direction. The Dublin Government has just introduced a package of measures - stopping just short of internment - which are tough enough to win the approval of Ulster Unionist leaders. We are now told by both Governments - for the first time in 20 years - that internment is "not ruled out".

The terrorists have not given up, but the next group of them to practise or resume violence seems likely to have to face internment. And then we shall see.

Conor Cruise O'Brien's autobiography "Memoir: My Life And Themes" will be published in October

BAROMETER

SEAN O'GRADY

Winner of the Week

Some lame duck Clinton turned out to be. Our winner this week is the leader of the free world. A distasteful judgement, maybe, but a legally accurate one all the same. In Osama bin Laden, Clinton found the best bogeyman since Ayatollah Khomeini. Foreign adventures have often done wonders for poll ratings since the days when Teddy Roosevelt spoke softly and carried a big stick. They could have sent special forces after Bin Laden to "take him out". But the dangers of the bungled commando raid are all too well remembered from Jimmy Carter's humiliating failure to rescue the hostages in Iran. Clinton has as sure a touch for tactics and public opinion as he has for White House interns. They don't call him "Slick Willy" for nothing.

Toy of the Week

Owners of the popular "Fondle Me" Bubba Bill Clinton doll might have had a good guess at this week's non-trouser action. When squeezed (below the waist) the leader of the toy free world will deliver lines like "oral sex is not adultery" and "baby you make my knees knock" and, prophetically, "I'll bomb Baghdad. I'll bomb France if you remove my underpants". Mind how you go.

Losers of the Week

The new generation of A-level law students, inspired by celebrity solicitors such as Kenneth Starr. They can't wait to grapple with concepts like truth, justice and manual sex. But their initial enthusiasms are soon thwarted by the disciplines of this most desiccated of subjects: 2,928 students, 27 per cent of the total, achieved a miserable U grade in their A-level, the worst fall rate of any subject. Perhaps they should reform the syllabus.

"Discuss the reasons why A-level students in law experience a failure rate five times that of those who study Welsh. Marks will be deducted from candidates who fail to stay awake during this paper. Your answers should be legally accurate but need not be complete."

Slimmer of the Week



Congratulations to Lord Hollick, who this week shed 23 stone of utterly useless fat (pictured) and saved himself £2m into the bargain. The proprietor of Anglia Television said no to Vanessa Feltz's excessive financial demands to present her Oprah-style "people" show. Not for nothing did Anglia for decades bring us "now, from Norwich, it's the quiz of the week. It's Sale of the Century". For the two million quid Vanessa is said to have wanted, Anglia could get, in this week's instant sale, two Jeremy Paxmans, or four Trevor McDonalds, or 10 Kirsty Youngs or an unlimited supply of Nicholas Parsons. No contest.

Image of the Week

A Lady Boy of Bangkok at the Edinburgh Festival: sex tourist sideshow or performance art? Either way just remember that a return ticket to Scotland to see one is a lot cheaper than trying to get to Phuket.



Tim Gadaski and Vladimir Yaremenko-Tolstoy

WE WERE half-way through our conversation before Tim told me that he was naked. I was unsure how to react to this information, thinking that if I pursued the subject of his precise state of undress, our conversation might suddenly take on overtones of Nicholson Baker's discourse on telephone sex. I calmly continued with the conversation, trying hard not to cojure too vivid a picture of the naked poet on the other end of the phone line.

"Nudity," explains Tim Gadaski, one half of The Naked Russian Poets who are currently appearing in the First International Festival of Naked Poets, "is a way of revitalising and returning to the essence of

poetry. It is the only art which can be created naked. You don't even need a pen and paper as the poem can be memorised. It's just me and the words, free from artificial constraints and devices. Nudity is the only way to experience this: clothes like chains must be thrown away."

To a cynic, the fact that they perform naked simply smacks of being an artificial device, devised to attract attention.

"This is what many people think," comes the naked reply, "but for me it is a liberation. I can focus on expression which becomes more potent and true. Words which are dull and lifeless when in magazines or books are

COLD CALL

SALLY CHATTERTON RINGS
TIM GADASKI

revitalised. Most of our audience understand and appreciate this." I thought initially that the English would be prudish and conservative regarding the naked body, but an audience has turned up to experience the poetry and will even be invited to join in on Sunday. If they just wanted to see naked people, they could go to a nudist beach or a brothel.

Nudist poetry is, in fact, sweeping Europe and Tim's reputation for it precedes him.

"I was performing some time ago, fully clothed, and I was pelted with tomatoes until I took my clothes off. I don't think I will ever be able to perform with my clothes on again. It doesn't bother me though because this is how I prefer to perform."

It isn't, however, how he prefers to live.

"What we are doing is completely different from naturism. They shop naked, play sport naked, get on the bus naked. Sheer nudity alone isn't the point of what we are doing - it is nudity in conjunction with

creativity, not just the routine of the everyday."

There does, however, seem to be a lack of a coherent philosophy in his work beyond the novelty of nudity. This is perhaps because he struggles with the English language and cannot quite vocalise exactly what he means. He tries, though.

"My poetry is about the meaning of life. I am trying to understand my life through poetry and also through my art. I need to have art in my life. Some people don't and their lives are grey and have no sense. I expose myself in every sense through my poetry and in that I find sense and meaning."

Beyond the Guggenheim

THE OPENING of the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao last October worked wonders for popularising post-1945 art.

Suddenly, your average punter who likes a nice Monet is tossing around names like Warhol, Oldenburg, Lichtenstein and Rosenquist, and taxi drivers confess that abstract expressionism is growing on them. At a stroke, it seems, accessibility to modern art has become democratised beyond the Guggenheim empire's wildest dreams, and the effect is rippling out to other comparable museums. One such is the Modern Art Museum that opened a year ago in the Portuguese city of Sintra, half an hour up the road from Lisbon.

Quietly, without fanfare, a private collector has assembled 500 works that are a match for the Guggenheim marvels and a refreshing treasure trove. Sintra, the former royal summer retreat, is already on the tourist trail, a morning's excursion from Lisbon, if you're in town for Expo '98. The artworks housed in the renovated Twenties casino will lift spirits more convincingly than the city's curlicued palace or twee tea-rooms run by dour, sloopy girls with moustaches.

The collector is Joe Barardo, a rough-diamond tobacco magnate from Madeira who made a fortune trading in South Africa. Barardo (who spends little time in Portugal and is shy of the press) apparently wanted to re-establish himself in his homeland with a flourish. Aware of his limited credentials as an art connoisseur, he formed an unlikely partnership with the histrionic Francisco Capelo, 43, an enchanting egomaniac with a puckish face and silver curls whose absolutely fabulous manner would outdazzle both Patsy and Edina.

"I don't come from the art world," Capelo says. "I was a stockbroker. Barardo was my client in the late Eighties. In 1993 I left brokerage and started working for him." The two men built a multi-million-pound publishing and television business and, with Capelo's eye and Barardo's cash, assembled within two years a \$60m collection of post-1945 art that must rank among the best in Europe. As Capelo says:

Iberia has another modern art centre.
By Elizabeth Nash



Wesselman's 'Great American Nude' (1953)

"Galleries were in a very bad situation in 1993. It was the bottom of the market and they were overloaded with stock after the Eighties boom, so it was possible to buy good pieces at very good prices." He bought most of the works from a handful of galleries in London and Paris, "not New York, it's not my taste. I'm a crazy European."

He later confesses to a passing contact with the art world after all. "When I was 12 I worked with the great Portuguese painter Carlos Botelho in his studio for five years. But I decided to study economics and management and make lots of money. For me, collecting is a disease."

The Barardo collection displays methodically, chronologically, examples from the main modern movements - pop art, minimalism, kinetic art, conceptual art, arte povera and the rest - in the way the Guggenheim's director Thomas Krens so conspicuously rejected for Bilbao. But to an untutored eye newly focused by the Guggenheim, Sintra offers a satisfying way of learning more.

There are also a surprisingly large number of European, and especially British, artists. "To hear experts talk," he says, "you'd think the only post-war artists in the world were American. It's just that in the States there developed an instant infrastructure of

collectors, which in Europe was very rudimentary."

European works reflect the dark legacy of war, the importance of existentialism in the crisis of post-war philosophy, and the assertion of individual freedom in a way the American portrayal of consumer culture fails to do, Capelo reckons.

Combining the two enriches our understanding of both, he says. Hence, lovely pieces by Bridget Riley, Michael Kidner, Richard Long, Francesco Clemente, Maria Helena Vieira da Silva, Allan Jones, Eduardo Paolozzi and Anselm Kiefer sit comfortably alongside Warhol's Brillo boxes, Oldenburg's giant soft light switches, an Alexander Calder mobile and a Lichtenstein mirror you want to see your face in. Capelo pauses by the Warhol: "Warhol used the idea of sculpture as something to do with the consumer, the supermarket. Up to then, it had been a man on a horse."

He bends my ear about his latest project, a design museum he wants to install in the heart of Lisbon's old, now wildly chic, port area. He has accumulated a personal collection of over 600 design classics from the Forties onwards, many of them crammed into his home, an 18th-century Lisbon house painted yellow, scarlet, blue and black in homage to his hero, Mondrian.

Capelo has prepared a book of his collection to be published in the autumn in English, and he is pestering the authorities to provide him with the building he has set his heart on, the Alcantara maritime station where the liners used to dock.

"This is a magnificent Forties building, which is being wasted on things like wedding parties," he scowls and shrugs at the same time. "It's so boring trying to negotiate with the government. They're just small officials pissing on the corners of their bureaucratic territory. Portugal is a country that relies on its industries of textiles, glass and ceramics. And modern art is already a classic. It is no longer sensational. We want to help people to like it, to lead them to it and to break down barriers."

'Luxury, Pop and Cool: Design Classics from the 1940s to Now', to be published by the Sintra Museum of Modern Art.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER

JOANNA BRISCOE

In the cellar of lust

He's sorted out Elton and Robbie Williams, so does Beechy Colclough have any advice for Bill and Hill?



Let's talk about sex, Beechy: discussing the Clintons in a singles bar Andrew Burman

THERE'S LIFE as we know it, then there's a dubious underworld swarming with legal, moral and sexual misconduct. And in between there's that seedy limbo, just below street level, alive in the consciousness, yet never, never sampled by one's friends and family. God forbid.

The singles bar, for example. I found Caspers listed under "Gimmicks" in a restaurant guide. Officially a "telephone exchange bar and grill", whatever that may be, at the end of the day, as the manager admits, it is a singles bar. "Unless you're a moose, you'll pick up," he adds helpfully. A suitable venue, then, for a spot of relationship counselling with "therapist to the stars" Beechy Colclough.

At a time when the most powerful man in the world reveals himself to be a common old lech, what would the therapist who has counselled Michael Jackson, Elton John, Robbie Williams and Gazza, offer in the way of marriage guidance to the spurned wife?

"Well, I would ask her: 'Do you like the abuse, Hillary? Do you like being singled out as the biggest mug in America?'" Beechy declaimed, with a characteristic rhetorical flourish.

We plunged underground into the world of the pale-suited office slapper, and the laddish exponent of the manicured "Blind Date"-style pick-up line. At Caspers, the Trocadero meets massage parlour, with a touch of Angus Steak House thrown in. "I've never been to one of these," my dapper, tanned, media-friendly companion said cheerfully. Chatting with the therapist to the stars in a singles bar felt like consulting a neural surgeon dressed as Mystic Meg.

We sat down somewhat uncertainly at a table equipped with

telephone for calling up anyone we fancied the look of across the room. The telephone is an ice-breaking tool lying somewhere between a cocktail and an Internet chat up.

Beechy Colclough, a teetotal 50-year-old, seemed singularly unfazed by the cackling 21-year-olds, balloons and azure cocktails, but then, he's seen it all. A broadcaster, psycho-therapist and relationships counsellor, he garners frequent press mentions by grateful popstars at least temporarily cured of their addictions.

Beechy would take the tough line on the Clintons: "Take away the President label, and you've got Bill the sex addict. You've got Hillary the tired wife who's sick of this, who's being humiliated. I would probably say to her: 'What are you getting out of staying? When the unacceptable becomes acceptable, that's when it's dangerously unacceptable. You're teaching your other half that they can do this stuff.' I'd say, 'What are you doing for women these days?'"

She is certainly making it all right for a lot of men to say "Hillary puts

up with it, dear, why don't you?" Squawking and hair-tossing batted around us. "I bet he's got a hairy bum," confided a girl nearby. "There's nothing worse than a hairy bum, though, is there?" replied her friend. Beechy and I returned to more weighty matters as we repaired to the bar.

"Maybe Hillary's husband is like the big silly son that she never had. Some guys never leave home without their mothers. Bill doesn't think with his head," said Beechy, warning to his subject.

Complete that quote, Beechy. "Well, he thinks with his dick, doesn't he?"

"I would be telling Hillary to put a vice on him, but it wouldn't be on his hands," he said, entering into the spirit of the place as he sipped his Diet Coke.

"It's an addictive relationship. Have you noticed how much she wears sunglasses these days?" said Beechy dourly. "The eyes never lie, and you wonder what's going on there. Dark days, bright days, Hillary's got them on. Maybe she's

welling up with tears, maybe she just can't look at it any more."

By this time a couple of suits had rung the table of a large group of girls, causing ripples through a sea of peroxide. The night's work had begun.

"I would be telling her that she can't forgive him until she actually acknowledges to him how hurt she is. Maybe they can't separate, but they could have some sort of separation within the marriage, so, like, 'All your privileges are withdrawn. Bill, I can play away as well.'"

"I'd tell Bill if he's going to come and bullshit with me like he has with the rest, don't bother, because it's going to cost him money, and I would throw him out anyway. I believe Bill has a sexual addiction. But then, addiction doesn't respond to logic."

Reassured by my chat with the therapist to the stars, his lulling accent, his couchside manner, I suddenly felt an alarming desire to cab it up the road to Harley Street and expound upon my neuroses on a black couch - any black couch.

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Fancy a beer? A new pair of trainers? A Lego set? Just go to the beach and keep your eyes open. By Joseph Gallivan

Life's a beach to comb

Remember those drifting hockey gloves? In December 1994, 34,000 fell overboard in the mid-North Pacific from the fire-stricken container ship *Hyundai Seattle*. Now in their fifth year at sea, they continue washing up. On 18 April 1998, Art Sows found a battered orange glove in Cook Inlet near Homer, Alaska. (Beachcombers' Alert, Spring 1998.)

In Oregon five years ago, people started holding what they called "speaker clinics". After a vessel holding 80,000 Nikes went down in mid-Pacific Ocean in 1990, the shoes were still washing ashore on the west coast of the USA three years later. Intact and wearable - but not in pairs. Enterprising seaside dwellers organised "meet and match" days where finders could compare finds and maybe come away with a workable pair.

Running shoes aren't the only surprising things drifting around the oceans. Beachcombers have found oil workers' hard hats, random bales of rubber flip-flops, Japanese fishermen's glass floats, yellow rubber ducks, empty survival suits, the odd aeroplane tyre, sea beans, and mysterious buoy-like objects that not even the US Navy can identify.

We know all this because beachcombers all over the world send their found objects to Curtis Ebbsmeyer of Seattle, Washington, either for identification's sake, or just so he can keep track of what's gone where. In his spare time he runs the *Beachcombers' Alert* newsletter and website, and brims with enthusiasm as he talks about his finds: "I feel I am teaching people how to use their eyes," he said. And the good doctor likes to get into the details.

For instance, on 31 March 1997, on a voyage between Boston and Baltimore, storm waves rolled the 816-foot long *Pol American* about 11 miles off the Cape Cod National Seashore. Twenty-three steel boxes went overboard, spilling household goods, shoes, glassware, a vehicle, department store merchandise, and

confectioneries. Within days, and 40 miles southward, US Coast Guard personnel began reporting chocolates and sweets beached on Nantucket Island: Hershey's Kisses, Tootsie Rolls, Reises dark German chocolates, and Werther's hard butterscotch candies. Beachcombers were warned by the health authority to eat only from unopened packages. Ebbsmeyer calculated the buoyant properties of chocolate (none), and surmised that the packaging kept them afloat. Again, when a Chinese cargo ship capsized in June 1997, spilling 500,000 cans of beer into the seas west of Hong Kong, he followed up with an experiment at home.

"Curious, I immersed an unopened 12oz aluminum can. The positive buoyancy of the beer and trapped air are sufficient to overcome the negative buoyancy of the metal, causing the can to barely float. The beer, having been aged for a few years afloat, may thus be served to diligent beachcombers around the Pacific Ocean. Please report your taste testing."

Shades of the Ancient Mariner live on - Ebbsmeyer notes that from 1991-1996, sailors reported 116 derelict vessels afloat in the North Atlantic. The Pacific has its junk craft too: he writes of a yacht called *FellowShip* sailing in bad visibility from New Zealand to Tonga and narrowly missing a semi-submerged barge and the abandoned German yacht *Taurus*.

Yes, there's an awful lot of stuff out there. Take, for instance, the black flip-flops. Hundreds of thousands of rubber sandals have littered Australia's Cocos and Keeling Islands in the Indian Ocean. Australian Senator Julian McGauran, blamed Indonesian manufacturers for dumping their rejects into the sea. One of Ebbsmeyer's star spotters Steve McLeod, from Oregon, noted that a few thousand pairs went down with the ice hockey equipment on the *Hyundai Seattle*. Flotsam theorists are on to it.

The paths that floating objects take in the sea particularly fascinate



A dedicated beachcomber scans the Brighton seafront for flotsam and jetsam from around the globe

Andrew Hasson

Ebbsmeyer and the global beachcombing community, which has boomed in the last three years, thanks to the Internet. When 29,000 yellow plastic ducks and bathtub friends (blue turtle, red beaver, green frog) fell overboard in a container in May 1992, near the International Date Line, halfway between the Equator and the North Pole, he got his friend Jim Ingraham to make a computer simulation to forecast where the toys would be washing ashore in Washington. The prediction proved to be right to the nearest month. Now they are tracking 100,000 floating toy cars that went down on 21 January 1998, 100 miles south of Japan. He expects them to hit the USA around the Millennium.

"We can't yet model the Atlantic, but we do know that an object floats about 10 miles a day. I often wonder what happened to the bodies in life vests from the *Titanic*. Many of them weren't recovered. A lot of stuff from that disaster must have ended up in the British Isles - Cornwall,

Ireland and the Hebrides are the likeliest places. The same with TWA Flight 800 debris. Brits ought to be looking out for it," he says excitedly.

It's no coincidence that he mentions bodies - Ebbsmeyer specialises in tracking floating corpses.

'Beer aged by a few years afloat may now be served to beachcombers around the Pacific - please report your taste testing'

The Seattle police often turn to him in cases of drowning and suspected suicide in the waters of Puget Sound. "It's not easy because not a lot of people know that humanity divides 50-50 into floaters and sinkers. Try it next time you're in the pool."

Causing excitement on two continents this year is the great "Lego Spill" of 1997. A container ship, the *Tokio Express*, en route from Rotterdam to New York on 13 February 1997, was hit by a rogue wave about 20 miles off Land's End. She tilted 60 degrees one way, then 40 degrees back, and lost 62 HGV-sized containers overboard. One of them held 5 million Lego pieces. Ironically, millions were destined for toy kits depicting sea adventures. Children in Cornwall found octopuses, dragons, diver flippers and sea grass pieces washed ashore and, thanks to an inventory provided by a Dutch shipping clerk, beach walkers in Florida, Georgia and the Carolinas are now looking out for the arrival of other elements, such as tiny plastic yellow rafts, swords, pistols, hats, flippers and spear guns.

The traffic might then get complicated. "The currents may also carry Lego elements northward past Norway into the Arctic Ocean, following the fabled Northeast Passage through the coastal waters of northern Siberia, arriving in Alaska after 12 years," says Ebbsmeyer. "From Alaska, currents may carry a few southward to Japan and then across the North Pacific Ocean to British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and California."

There's an active sub-group within the beachcombing community who collect sea-beans. These are hard, polished seeds like striped pebbles, that are washed into rivers, and then into the sea, from rainforests, or after hurricanes. Cathie Katz of Melbourne Beach, Florida (e-mail: seabean@castlegate.net) can talk about them for hours: "None of the leading malacologists (shell specialists) were interested in them, so I decided to find out all I could. They can survive at sea for hundreds of years," she told me. "They're the great unexplored area of botany."

Katz has written four illustrated books about the marine life. She also helps arrange the Annual Sea Bean Symposiums. It seems beachcombers like nothing more than to gather together and poke around at foreign objects.

Britain has its own sea bean fans too. Alma Hathway of Sancreed, Penzance, takes Caribbean sea beans, breaks their protective coating and germinates them in fresh water in her conservatory. "We get all sorts of interesting ones." She seems to typify the genteel militancy of beachcombers everywhere. When she found a drifter from a Nova Scotia fishery with a "Please Return if Found" note attached, she rebelled. "These fisheries use non-flammable nets that catch dolphins and birds as well - so I didn't return it," says Hathway, a botanical illustrator. "I didn't want to contribute to that sort of thing."

'Beachcombers' Alert' on the web: www.beachcombers.org. Report finds to: Curtis C Ebbsmeyer, 6306 21st Ave NE, Seattle, Washington 98115, USA. Please include photos of yourself and drifters, written accounts, locations and dates. Factual descriptions, concerning the drift of the water body fronting your shore, are welcome

One family's escape from road rage

THE BOYS have more gears on their bikes than they've had birthdays, along with cantilevered brakes, fat tyres with ferocious grips and bull-bar handlebars that would look bizarre if we weren't so used to them now. All this is par for the course since the mountain-bike craze swept ordinary push-bikes off the road 10 years or so ago. But I can't help feeling that they're slightly over-equipped for their needs.

After all, the boys only use them once a week at most, when we trek across the pedestrian crossing for a 20-minute spin around the park. Not a mountain trail in sight, unless you count one slightly raised path that winds through the trees beside the railway line.

Earlier this century, at a time when no one had any gears, tens of thousands of cyclists would stream out of our towns and cities every weekend to picnic in the countryside. By the time I had graduated to three gears, at some point in the late Sixties, my mother would happily pack me and a friend off for the day on our bikes, with saddle-bags full of sandwiches.

I can't imagine that this sort of parental insouciance lasted much longer, at least in the pure built-up parts of the country. I have a vivid memory of what seemed to me the turning-point in the battle between the free-roaming child cyclist and the motor car, a process which must have been replicated countless times up and down the country: first, a girl who lived a few doors away was knocked off her bike; then, a few months later, an 11-year-old boy from a family we all knew was killed on the by-pass.

Tom, my elder son, is almost 11, and I can't imagine allowing him unrestricted access to the roads for the foreseeable future. It matters how high a score he gets in his Cycling Proficiency Test. Perhaps I am over-protective: I know that many children of his age cycle to

PARK LIFE



BRUCE MILLAR

school, even in London. But I hardly even allow myself to cycle in London any more.

I was - still would be - the perfect candidate for commuting by bicycle: after all, I loathe sitting in a traffic jam or standing on the Tube, and I'm always pathetically keen to boost my fitness. So when *The Independent* installed showers a few years ago, I duly invested in a bike, a helmet, one of those shiny, stretchy shirts in garish colours that act as red flags to car drivers, and got peddling.

I knew that it was relatively unsafe; that cyclists were at risk from ignorant, selfish drivers; that the sort of carelessness which may lead only to a dented bumper and a sullen exchange of paperwork if cars are involved may well be fatal to a cyclist. One colleague suggested that I must be the type who missed challenges in modern life so needed to dice with death to feel properly alive. But, for a couple of years at least, I felt completely safe, and cycled to and from work every day, in all weathers.

Then, two or three years ago, something changed. The traffic in London became somehow denser, more aggressive: the drivers seemed narrower-eyed and looking for trouble, as if in response to the recent naming of road rage. Close shaves or exchanges of verbal abuse with drivers multiplied from occasional to weekly

occurrences. Within the space of two months, my sister and two friends of mine were unceremoniously dumped from their bikes by passing cars. In each case, the cyclist survived, and the car driver, presumably fearing manslaughter charges, sped from the scene.

At about this point I lost my nerve, and resolved to keep my sons off the road for as long as possible. My hopes of getting back on the saddle rose at Labour's election victory since, in opposition, the party had sounded friendlier to cyclists than the Tories. Silly me: they were only after my vote. Since May last year, I have waited in vain for action from John Prescott, Glenda Jackson or anyone else who holds sway in transport policy, but they have sat on their hands for fear of offending the various road lobbies (although this week's announcement that Trafalgar Square may be closed to traffic sounds promising).

Which is why, a couple of times a year, I load up the bikes on a rack attached to the back of the car and drive south to Kent and the Penshurst Off Road Club (acronym Porc, featuring a fat pink pig in shades), a veritable cyclists' paradise. At least, it's a paradise if you're 18, own a specialist bike with sprung forks, and enjoy cycling in full body armour. I am not joking: there exists such a thing as a cycling breastplate.

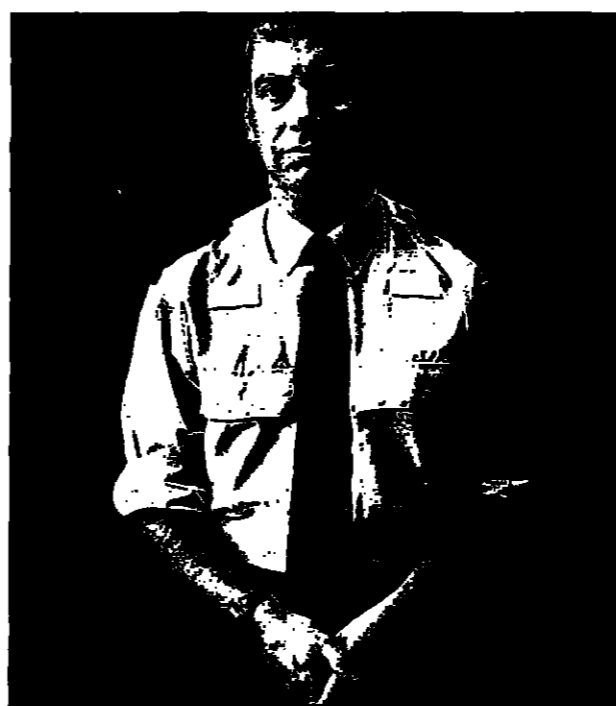
The trails at Porc are steep, narrow, heavily rutted tracks through thick woodland valleys, demanding for the toughest adult mountain cyclist. At seven, Darcy is usually the youngest cyclist present, and even at his games finds it difficult. Last weekend, he achieved the Full Family (fury with inanimate object), attacking first a large fern for impeding him and then his bike for being "stupid". Tom and I fell off our bikes laughing. But at least there were no cars.

MY WEEK

SEVEN DAYS IN THE LIFE OF OMAGH POLICEMAN DEREK ELLIOTT

PC DEREK Elliott was one of the first police officers to arrive at the horrific scene of the Omagh bombing. Mr Elliott has been a part or full time officer for 16 years, and sees himself as a community policeman. He is 36 years old, married, with sons aged 13 and 10 and a girl, aged six.

Saturday
8am, Fintona Police Station. I started my shift at Fintona, about seven miles from Omagh, and part of the sub-division. I opened up the station and got on with routine police work. The first bomb warning was at around 2.30pm, and after 3pm we were told to proceed to Omagh. Then the line went mad. We were trying to get details of what had happened from the officers at the scene, but all we could hear was: "Casualties, casualties." I drove seven miles in about six minutes. When we got there it was carnage. I have been to bomb scenes before, once where two soldiers were killed, but what I saw at Omagh was the most appalling, most shocking thing I have ever seen. There were bodies lying everywhere, people crying, and all I could see through the dust was blood and bodies. I grabbed my first aid kit and threw my gun belt into the car boot because it gets in the way when you're trying to work with injured people. One of the first casualties I came across was a woman who was being lifted on to a stretcher but her leg stayed on the ground. I saw it was just held together by skin and tissue. I asked a member of the public to pick it up, but he just shook his head and said: "I can't, I can't." So I did it myself. When we started to treat the injured someone gave me a box of Pampers nappies, and I started using them rather than the stuff from the first aid kit because it was quicker - there was no time even to tear the wraps from the first aid kit because the injuries were so bad, so deep and there was so much blood. The worst, the very worst, was when the kids kept coming before us. I knew one of them, a young girl, but I refused to let my mind recognise her; I had to detach myself.



DEREK ELLIOTT

The public were terrific, and we organised a makeshift mortuary in an alleyway, and then we turned two shops into a bigger mortuary. We had to use pub tables, shelving and doors as stretchers, and private cars and buses as ambulances. All the time I was trying to shut the screaming from my head. At 6pm we went to the mortuary in the Army Camp. At that stage we had 20 bodies and an arm. We worked there until 12.30am before going to Omagh Police Station to stand down. It was not until 2am that I got home. I hugged my wife and my three kids, had a beer, cried a little, and collapsed into bed.

Sunday
At Omagh Police Station at 8am. I know this station quite well, I was based here in 1993 when it got blown up. I put my notes together and then had to go and see the investigating team. Our evidence would be needed for any future prosecution, and also the inquests. I talked to the team and felt relieved at being able to unburden myself. I began to realise why people go to

psychologists to talk. I got home at about 10pm, exhausted, fell asleep.

Monday
8am Omagh Police Station. We were told that a VIP would be meeting us, we were told to put on our full dress uniform and go to the Lisnally Barracks, and so we did. We got there at 2.30pm and we were told we would be meeting the Northern Ireland Secretary, Mo Mowlam. We waited for four hours, and she did not turn up. We felt, how can I put this, disappointed by the whole thing. There was so much to do, and we didn't have four hours to waste. At 6pm we went to the mortuary to work. There were bodies being moved. One of the guys who had been working all day said in the evening they'd had nothing to eat. Being a local man I knew a few people so I organised some food and got them some water for washing. I thought again about the four hours wasted. Got stood down at midnight.

Tuesday
8am Omagh. Told again to dress up and go to the Army Camp for a VIP.

so we all sighed and did so. It was Prince Charles, and I was most impressed with him. He showed concern and genuine interest in what people had been doing on Saturday. He was very polite to everyone and took longer speaking to us than he needed to.

Wednesday
A very sad day of funerals. One in the morning, of a young girl called Jolene Marlowe and one in the afternoon of Veda Shortt, who is the sister-in-law of one of my colleagues. There was not an awful lot for us to do, the mourners seemed to do the organising themselves. Everyone behaved impeccably, including the Press. There was no hassle, no animosity; just a awful lot of sadness.

Thursday
We were asked if we would like to speak to the media, some refused, a few, including myself, agreed. As far as I am concerned I can't stress enough that I'm representing my fellow officers who had worked ever so hard for these last few days, I am very proud of them. I have done nothing special myself. My wife was worried about my identity coming out but I reassured her: I could relax for the first time in days, and had a quiet drink after work with some colleagues.

Friday
Day off. I took my family to do what a lot of those bomb victims were doing that day, shopping for school uniforms for the children. We went to Enniskillen, which of course, had its own bomb in the past. On Saturday we shall be at a special service in the town to remember our dead. My brother-in-law and sister-in-law are both Catholics. I was born and brought up in Omagh, and I am proud to be an Omagh man. I'm proud of the fact that in this town Protestants and Catholics live and work together, and there is a lot of inter-marriage. The bombers, whether they are republican or loyalist, will never be able to divide us.

INTERVIEW BY KIM SENGUPTA

Otto Wichterle

OTTO WICHTERLE was a chemist of international distinction who not only conceived, but brought to fruition, the hydrophilic soft contact lens which is now the principal item of visual correction for many millions of people in the world.

He was born in Prostějov, in what later became Czechoslovakia, the son of a producer of agricultural machinery. He began his career at the Institute of Experimental Organic Chemistry in Prague, but, when this was closed under German rule in 1939, he went to the Bata shoe manufacturing business. There he invented a nylon fibre which is frequently employed for industrial uses. He was imprisoned by the German Gestapo from 1942 until 1943.

After the Communist take-over of Czechoslovakia in 1948, Wichterle became Professor of Macromolecular Chemistry at the Technical University of Prague. Numerous important appointments followed and, in 1961, after about 10 years of research, he started to manufacture hydrophilic soft contact lenses.

The early Czech soft hydrophilic contact lenses were manufactured by a spin cast technique during which polymerisation was taking place. These lenses were thick and there was often the problem that the lens did not act according to its stated dioptric power. Wichterle travelled extensively at this time and would distribute, gratis, handfuls of the lenses to interested ophthalmologists and optometrists world-wide.

A well-known American optometrist, Dr Robert Morrison, from Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, went to Prague at this time and was said to



The author of some 200 patents, the recipient of innumerable awards and honours, he was tall, slim, elegant and kindly. The contact lens world adored him

have bought the rights to the lenses from the Czech government for \$330,000. Later, representatives from the National Patent Development Corporation arrived in Prague and are said to have bought rights for \$1m; this may have been for the manufacturing technique. This corporation in turn are said to have sold the rights to the Bausch and Lomb Company for \$3m. Bausch and Lomb then produced the lenses in America, again by the spin cast technique.

In the very early 1970s, an eminent optometrist from Boston, Dr Donald Korb, together with Dr Miguel Refojo, a senior scientist and polymer chemist at the Retina Foundation in Boston, founded a company called Corneal Sciences Incorporated which manufactured soft hydrophilic lenses from a different material which was lathed in the dry state.

These lenses, for use in the short-sighted, were extremely thin and called membrane lenses. The great bulk of soft contact lenses are now manufactured by lathing technique, although hydroxyethyl methacrylate (Hema), Wichterle's original material, is still extensively used.

In 1968 Wichterle was a supporter of Alexander Dubcek, the Czechoslovak Communist Party leader, in his "Prague Spring" reforms. These were doomed to failure, however, and when Czechoslovakia was invaded by Dubcek arrested, this support led to Wichterle's being stripped of his academic orders and positions. He was dismissed as Director of the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry which he had, in fact, founded. He continued to work in a laboratory but was allowed no cleaning or maintenance staff.

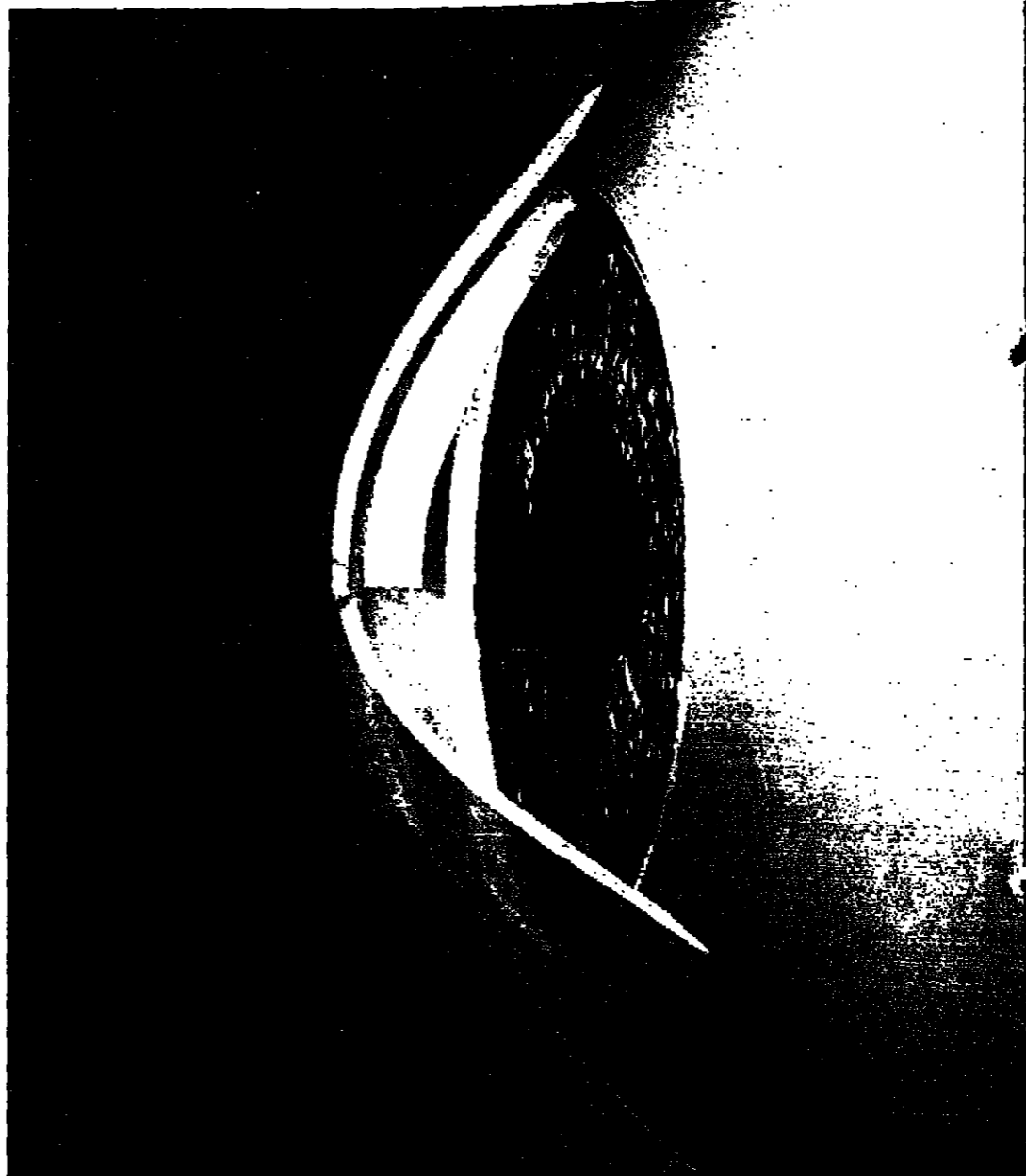
In 1989, after the "Velvet Revolution", Wichterle was elected head of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences and resumed his position at the Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry.

In 1993, his 80th birthday was celebrated by a conference in Prague at the institute. To this conference came the leaders of contactology throughout the world. They came to Prague, which had lost all the sadness of its Communist years, to honour this intellectual giant. At 80 he was sharp as a pin.

Wichterle was the author of some 200 patents in organic chemistry, plastics and biomaterials. He was awarded an incredible number of awards and honours. He was tall, slim, elegant and kindly. The contact lens world adored him and so, as was evident to me, in 1993, did the professors and staff at his institute.

IAN A. MACKIE

Otto Wichterle, chemist: born Prostějov, Austro-Hungarian Empire 27 October 1913; Assistant Lecturer, Institute of Experimental Organic Chemistry, Czech Technical University, Prague 1935-39; Assistant Professor, Faculty of Chemistry 1945; Professor of Macromolecular Chemistry 1949-69; Head of Polymer Department, Bata-Zlín 1940-42, 1944-45; Head of Department of Macromolecular Chemistry, Institute of Chemistry 1955-59; Director, Institute of Macromolecular Chemistry 1959-70; President, Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences 1990-98; married 1938 Ludmila Zahradníková (two sons); died Strážka, Czech Republic 18 August 1998.



In 1961, Wichterle manufactured the first hydrophilic soft contact lenses, now the principal means of visual correction for millions of people
Moorfields Eye Hospital

Joel Barr

JOEL BARR's life was an ideological and political odyssey of the 20th century. It was the strange odyssey of an American boy born of Russian émigré parents in New York, who embraced Communism during the Great Depression and became a minor figure in the annals of Cold War espionage, before defecting to Moscow where he helped build the Soviet electronic and computer industry - only to realise, in the end, that the cause he had so faithfully served was wrong.

The years which shaped Joel Barr began with the stock market crash of 1929. They stretched on into that bleak era when *dole queues* lined every corner and his father could not even feed the family, but when a new political creed promising equality and justice for all caught the imagination of young idealists around the world. Among them was Barr. He devoured Communist literature and joined the Young Communist League, before enrolling to study engineering at the City College of New York. There he met Julius Rosenberg and Mort

Sobell, fellow members of the league with whom he would become close friends.

With the onset of war, Barr enlisted with the US Army Signals Corps, and later landed a well-paid job at the defence contractor Sperry Gyroscope, only to be sacked when it was discovered he was a Communist. Living off savings, he took a masters degree at Columbia before leaving for an extended stay in Paris, where he planned to study music. But, in 1950, the storm broke, with the sensational arrest of Rosenberg and his wife Ethel on charges of spying for the Soviet Union.

Barr happened to hear the news when he was visiting Prague, to sample a little socialism at first hand. Convinced he would share the Rosenbergs' fate if he returned home, he decided to settle in Czechoslovakia. Barr married a Czech girl and started a family. Soon he was joined by Alfred Sarant, a fellow engineer and Communist he had known in his New York student days. The two began working in electronics, and in 1956 the Soviet leader



Barr: a 'patriotic American'

Nikita Khrushchev, only too aware of his country's backwardness in the field, invited them to Russia.

Whether Barr was a spy remains a mystery. In an interview with the *Los Angeles Times* in 1992, he denied passing information to the NKVD, the predecessor of the KGB, and

maintained that, once he had defected, "nothing I did in America was used in my work in the Soviet Union". Sobell, who spent 18 and a half years in gaol as an accomplice of the Rosenbergs, also insisted Barr was not a member of the ring. But US intelligence documents suggest at the very least that the two handed over 17 drawings relating to advanced radar systems developed by the Bell Laboratories company.

Whatever the truth, Barr's fears were more than justified. A year earlier, the Americans had finally decoded top secret NKVD cable traffic in and out of the Soviet mission in New York in the mid 1940s. The now legendary "Venona" transcripts provided the first pointer that Donald McLean was a Soviet spy, as well as the evidence which would send the Rosenbergs to the electric chair. They also mentioned Barr and Sarant, under the code names of Mefr and Kh'Yus. In those early Cold War years, when paranoia reigned and alleged American Communists were hunted down like vermin, that

alone would have been ground for instant arrest.

Khrushchev's invitation transformed Barr's circumstances. The American who had become Joseph Barr in Prague became Iosif Venniamonovich Berg, scientist and honoured citizen of Leningrad (now St Petersburg). He and Sarant - by now Filipp Georgievich Staros - were set up in their own laboratory, and given flats, chauffeur-driven cars and salaries beyond an ordinary Soviet's dreams. The investment paid off. Barr admitted he helped construct the first Soviet radar-guided anti-aircraft gun, and specialists credit him and Sarant with a crucial role in the development of Soviet micro-electronics, and the establishment of the Zelenograd technology centre north of Moscow. Arguably, it was thanks to Sarant and Barr that the Soviet Union kept up in the arms race with the US as long as it did.

After Sarant died in 1979, Barr's importance waned. His wife divorced him and returned to Czechoslovakia. His final job was with the

giant Svetlana electronic group, near St Petersburg. By the time of his death he was a forlorn and eccentric figure, a wanderer between worlds, one of which no longer existed. Of his six children (four by Bergova, two by a mistress known only as Elvira) two had defected back to America, two lived in the Czech Republic and two in Russia.

Having never lost his own citizenship, and having never been charged with any crime, he travelled often to the US on a Russian passport in his later years. In 1991 he regained his American one and claimed residency in San Diego from where, to the fury of many a right-winger in Congress, he received monthly social security benefits.

Barr maintained that at heart he was a "patriotic American" who wanted to see Communism flourish in the Soviet Union so that one day it would take root in the country of his birth. "Nothing I did was against the American people," he would say later. "I was working to create a system that would have more jus-

tice and less suffering, and then bring it back to America." But after the collapse of the system, even in its motherland, he reluctantly acknowledged that history would probably show the Russian revolution to have been "a tremendous mistake, a step backward for mankind".

He spent his final years unthanked and unremembered by the new masters of the Kremlin - just a garrulous old man who spoke bad Russian with a Brooklyn accent, another disenchanted Communist who dreamt of making a capitalist fortune by inventing a machine for cut-price micro-chips, or by selling his life story to an American publisher.

Barr died, in the words of his former secretary Svetlana Shmelyova to the *Los Angeles Times*, "poor and completely forgotten, in the only clinic in Moscow that would take him in".

RUPERT CORNWELL

Joel Barr, electronics engineer: born New York 1916; married Vera Bergova (two sons, two daughters; marriage dissolved); died Moscow 1 August 1998.

The Rev Tom Nicol

A CHAPLAIN to the Black Watch from 1942, Tom Nicol was a commanding figure who inspired all those around him. His courage and readiness to sacrifice himself for his men was shown in one particular action in North Africa.

After the fall of Tripoli in January 1943, the 51st Highland Division advanced rapidly until it met a savage rearguard action at Wadi Akrit on 6 April. The 5th Battalion the Black Watch suffered heavy casualties from machine gun and mortar fire which left many wounded lying exposed, their recovery made difficult by enemy sniper fire. Nicol went forward with stretcher bearers. Under intense fire a number of stretcher bearers were shot, but Nicol continued to carry back more than 20 wounded men. The citation of his 1943 Military Cross recorded that he was "an inspiration to the whole battalion".

Nicol, a son of the manse, was

born in 1917, the third child of David Nicol, a minister, who also held an MC. As his father moved round various ministries in the Church of Scotland, Tom Nicol attended many schools followed by Aberdeen University. As a student, his career was distinguished by his sporting prowess, though he did gain two degrees, the second in Divinity. He was no slouch on the rugby field, where his language was as robust as his playing. He was skilful enough as a pack leader to merit a Scottish trial. His attitude to his eventual calling was revealed in an article in the university magazine, where he quoted from Disraeli's last novel, *Endymion*: "His Christianity was muscular".

At the outbreak of the Second World War he enlisted as a private soldier but was soon commissioned into the Black Watch. He was released from the regiment for a short time to complete his Divinity degree

and returned to their 5th Battalion as Padre. Before embarking for North Africa with the 51st Highland Division, he married Mary Taylor.

After North Africa he was with the Black Watch as they fought in Sicily and then returned to train for D-Day. In Normandy, in some of the thickest fighting before the breakthrough, Nicol proved a tower of strength as the casualties mounted.

Demobilised in 1946, he was appointed Minister of Broughty Ferry. Although he was happy there, his heart lay with the Black Watch. He rejoined them in 1949 and served in the 1st Battalion in Germany and then Korea. Their toughest action in Korea was the defence of the Hook, the key to the Samichon Valley on the road to Seoul. With horns and trumpets blowing the enemy swarmed across the hills. They were mown down in swathes, but still came on, stopped in the end by the bayonets

of the Black Watch and other units. Nicol often toured the battlefields with a medical officer and the pair became known as "body and soul".

Nicol was held in the highest regard and his open air services were attended by men from other units. On one occasion, shell-fire came very close during a service - the CO looked to Nicol, who simply winked and continued his sermon. After Korea, there was a different form of fighting for the Black Watch, this time in Kenya, where the battalion scoured the jungle for Mau Mau.

Nicol was then posted to Germany as Senior Chaplain with the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers. On his return to Scotland he completed his time in the Army as Assistant Chaplain General, Scottish Command.

On his retirement from the Army in 1972, he was called to Crathie Church on Deeside as minister and domestic chaplain in Scotland to the

Royal Family, an appointment he held until 1979. He retired to live at St Fillans, on Loch Earn. There he lived happily with his wife and enjoyed the pastimes he had pursued in his youth, fell-walking, swimming, fishing and gardening. He survived a heart attack in 1984, and with his wife moved to a smaller house in Comrie.

MAX ARTHUR

Thomas James Trail Nicol, soldier and minister of the church: born 24 January 1917; ordained 1942; Padre, 5th Battalion, the Black Watch 1942-44; MC 1943; Minister, Broughty Ferry 1946-49; Royal Army Chaplain's Department 1949-72; MBE (Military) 1953; Assistant Chaplain General, Scotland 1967-72; Minister, Crathie Church, and Domestic Chaplain in Scotland to the Queen 1972-79; married 1942 Mary Taylor (two daughters); died Comrie, Perthshire 25 July 1998.



Nicol won an MC after the fall of Tripoli in 1943. His citation described him 'an inspiration to the whole battalion'



Smith: Buckfast tonic

DRESSED in a black polo neck and a pair of dark trousers a man busily swept up the leaves in one corner of the courtyard at Buckfast Abbey, in Devon. "Is this the way to the bookshop?" asked a couple of visitors who were taking every opportunity to see "the hidden Buckfast" and did not fear the authority of a mere gardener. "No, no. It's up on the left, back the way you've come!" A gust of wind whirled the leaves back out of the wheelbarrow. Abbot Leo Smith grinned. "They work us hard here - always busy."

Not for an instant did the couple recognise the man with the shock of

white hair as the jovial Abbot of Buckfast, who half an hour earlier had solemnly taken Mass and preached inspiringly or who, dressed in the black habit of the Benedictines, with abbatial cross glinting, would welcome groups of foreign visitors in French, German or Italian.

Philip Smith was born in 1916, and was educated at Kingsbridge Grammar School. He entered the Benedictine community at Buckfast Abbey in 1934 (when he was given the religious name of Leo), and made his solemn profession as a monk in 1938. In pre-war Fascist Italy, he studied Philosophy at the International

Abbot Leo Smith

Benedictine College of Sant' Anselmo in Rome, but was forced by the outbreak of hostilities to return to Britain. He was ordained priest in 1940, and at the end of the war completed his doctorate in Rome.

In the Fifties, he accompanied the Buckfast beekeeper Brother Adam on extensive travels through Italy, searching for bee breeding materials. Smith was completely at home in the Bee Department, describing the honey-extracting processes or the value of a Buckfast Queen Bee. He would discuss with both scientists and commercial beekeepers from all over the world Brother

Adam's quest to breed the perfect honeybee, which resulted in the distinctive tan-coloured Buckfast bee - gentle, disease-resistant and honey-producing.

Smith spent 17 years in charge of the Tonic Shop and the manufacture of the Buckfast tonic wine. From 1957 until 1968 he was Prior of the abbey, and also held the post of Master of Studies for the English Benedictine Congregation.

Smith became Abbot in 1976, for the statutory eight-year term, and was re-elected in 1984. During this time he helped to keep the abbey in touch with changes in the outside

world and also to show thousands of visitors to the abbey that monastic life was relevant to modern society.

I remember him too in his St John's Ambulance uniform, as president of the local division 1976-80, dashing off to yet another demonstration or standing on the sidelines of the inter-schools matches, where he was always at the ready with the bucket and sponge.

His public speaking was humorous and enthralling. So too private were his many tales of his student days at Sant' Anselmo College. His descriptions of the restoration works of the medieval buildings of Buckfast

were fascinating and instructive. He was a colourful, larger-than-life character who could always argue the opposing view, always enjoy strong debate. He was a true emissary of his God, who kept in touch with the world and led by his kindly example.

LESLEY BILL

Philip Smith, priest: born Rochester, Kent 17 June 1916; clothed a monk as Dom Leo 1934; ordained priest 1940; Prior of Buckfast 1957-63; Abbot 1976-92; Titular Abbot of Colchester 1992-98; died Buckfastleigh, Devon 10 July 1998.

Leandre Cristòfol

LEANDRE CRISTÓFOL, Spain's last Surrealist sculptor, lived until he was 90 without ever having sold a single work. In spite of being self-taught, he was one of Spain's most important Surrealist artists and a pioneer of abstract sculpture who combined simple materials with revolutionary ideas.

Cristòfol was an introverted and kindly man who always lamented his inability to draw. "I have suffered because I never learned to draw well. I have wept for not being able to express an idea," he once confessed. He was renowned for his modest ways: "I never lifted a finger to make myself known. I just got on with my work, and most of it I kept."

Born in a small Catalan village of a humble family of farmworkers, he left the harsh village landscape of rocks and trees for the town of Lleida in 1922, aged 14. There he learned the trade of carpenter and cabinetmaker, and that was how he described himself until the end of his life.

He began his artistic career with figurative wood carvings but moved on to create graceful, airy structures from wood, clock-springs, watch-straps and discarded material. In 1930 the Móra Museum in Lleida mounted his first exhibition. Three years later he wrote: "I have started upon a path towards new forms; a path that I think will lead me to the beginning of the beginning." He had just produced his work *Del aire al aire* ("From Air to Air") which some specialists consider one of Surrealism's greatest creations.

Around this time he associated with a group of avant-garde artists in Barcelona calling themselves "logophobes" who edited the review *Art and* - through the Surrealist poet Benjamin Péret - made contact with Surrealists in Paris. Péret wrote to André Breton: "I have met in Lleida a chap who does very interesting drawings and sculptures. He is a carpenter." As a result of the friendship, Cristòfol exhibited in international exhibitions that the Surrealists organised in Tokyo and Paris.

As with many of his generation, Cristòfol's life was disrupted and his creative work frustrated by the Spanish Civil War between 1936 and 1939. He had the foresight to bury the works he had created between 1932 and 1936 and many of these naturalistic forms are now on show in Catalan museums. After the war, he fled to France and was interned in concentration camps for Spanish exiles in France and Morocco, where he became dimly aware of his budding international reputation, but for many years he was isolated from the artistic world.

In 1953 he won a scholarship to

study in Paris and Florence, and on his return shut himself in his studio in Lleida - in a building that was to have been demolished that week - and amidst the neglect and indifference of the official art world developed the major part of his work, which reflected a number of important trends of post-war art. From umbrella rods, glass, plastic, springs and corks he created "Solentis" ("Slow Motion"), a work that sought continuous motion and anticipated kinetic art; "Planimetrías" ("A Play of Levels"), that was pure abstraction; "Formes-Constans" ("Formes-Consumption") evoking the new realism of Pop art; and assemblages that prefigured "arte povera".

Through sculptures and wooden reliefs he experimented with concepts of movement, volume, space and forms, creating what the Barcelona newspaper *La Vanguardia* described this week as "a surprising Surrealist lyricism".

He lived for some of the harsh post-war years in Barcelona but never felt at home in the city's artistic atmosphere and returned to Lleida where he stayed until his death. It was not until the late Seventies and Eighties, when he mounted exhibitions in Barcelona, Madrid and Paris, and was invited to participate in an exhibition with Giacometti, that his work became appreciated among a younger generation of avant-garde artists.

The Catalan poet Joan Brossa said this week: "I admired Cristòfol because he was one of the first to make abstract

'I have suffered because I never learned to draw well. I have wept for not being able to express an idea'

sculptures and his work continues to withstand the passage of time. He was a solitary person, who was proud to be able to show all his work because he never sold a single one. In that sense he was a pure artist who understood art as an act of freedom."

In 1979 he created his last series of important sculptures, *Alfa Omega Alfa*, an allegory of the harmony and cycles of nature. In 1989, the year in which the Miró Foundation in Barcelona mounted a big



Cristòfol: 'Surrealist lyricism'

Hermínia Sirvent / El País

retrospective, King Juan Carlos awarded him the Gold Medal for Fine Arts.

Leandre Cristòfol's works are represented in museums throughout Spain, including the Reina Sofía modern art centre in Madrid, all lent or donated by the artist. In his final years he created tiny delicate sculptures of insects, evoking his childhood when his mother had taught him to make models with the rushes that grew in the pond near the family home.

Despite his self-effacing gentleness, he was from the outset convinced of the value - indeed grandeur - of his work. "I always had faith that things made with such love and care would touch history in some way."

ELIZABETH NASH

Leandre Cristòfol, carpenter and sculptor: born Os de Balaguer, Catalonia 1908; died Lleida, Catalonia 19 August 1998.

GEOGRAPHICAL NOTES

MICHAEL TOBIAS

Paradise is here, now, if only we will accept it

AWARENESS EXACTS a price. In a world of scarcity, political and ecological triage will inevitably figure. Even with a projected \$50 trillion annual economy, the continuing high number of newborns on the planet will not make decisions any easier. Never before have ecological and population considerations played such dramatic roles in analysis and national determinations.

Hence, individual men and women are called upon to become policymakers, to make those determinations, to take their life styles into greater consideration than ever before. By example each individual can inspire surprisingly huge assemblages of people. Ethical solutions, reasonableness, beauty, and inspiration, all have in their favour the force of silent majorities, the equivalent power of chain letters, the quiet seduction of an ideal.

Our species, however has long been engaged in a war against the planet, a pattern that is ecologically insane. We know this to be true by now. Our acknowledgement itself is an act of meditation poised for selfless, even heroic change. Among more and more of the world's religious thinkers, there is a surge of ecologically aware activism. Buddhists in Thailand are fighting to save forests. Jews, Catholics, and Anglicans in the US have sponsored a National Religious Partnership for the Environment. And in late 1997 the leader of some 300 million Orthodox Christians, Bartholomew I, finally declared: "To commit a crime against the natural world is a sin." It was the first time that word - "sin" - has ever been officially linked by the Church to human behaviour towards the environment.

The same week Bartholomew made this pronouncement, demographers also made big news. They had gathered in New York to examine the whys and wherefores of a silent revolution under way. In a not altogether unexpected trend, an inexplicable dynamic was shown to be at work, affecting smaller families in at least 45 countries. The demographers predicted that, by the year 2015, 88 "countries and territories will have replacement levels at or below 2.1 children per woman". Granted, few of those countries cited were among the high-population nations, yet the pattern seemed to be spreading.

We must remain optimistic if such new



Bartholomew I: a green patriarch

trends and attitudes are to gain fuel; to augur the kind of changes necessary to preserve the planet. Our children need to be informed and inspired, not daunted. Although the planet is held captive by much that defines our personality and behaviour, that aggression and its myriad tragedies need not be destiny.

But, in refashioning global fate beyond simple hope, certain sobering truths must be firmly absorbed and embraced. First among them is the harrowing truth that our species' fertility is out of control, even after half a century of family planning efforts. Based on current global fertility trends, we will number at least 12 billion people late in the 21st century. Second, our consumptive patterns are disastrous. Habitat is vanishing, or burning up, and species are disappearing, or verging on disappearance, at a rate of between 10 and 800 per day. Fertility trends and consumptive patterns can change, and they must. It all hinges upon personal choices.

Throughout human history, hope and dread have always mingled. But never before have the risks been so permanent. Paradise is here, now, if only we will own up to it, accept it, and do our part to keep it true. We must be prepared for a lifetime of service and diligence. The ethical and ecological responsibilities that being human entails will only increase as humanity finally comes of age.

Michael Tobias is the author of *'World War III: population & the biosphere at the end of the millennium'*, published by Continuum Publishers, New York

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

IN MEMORIAM

PLANTAGENET: Richard III, King of England, and those who fell at Bosworth Field, having kept faith, 23 August 1485. "Loyalist me Lie!" Richard III Society, 4 Oakley Street, Chelsea, London SW3 5NN.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (notices, functions, Forthcoming marriages, Marriages), which must be submitted in writing, are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 0171-293 2000.

The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

TODAY: The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am.

TOMORROW: The King's Troop Royal Horse Artillery mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 10am; 1st Battalion Welsh Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Grenadier Guards.

FORTHCOMING MARRIAGES

Mr M. Steeuw and Miss E. C. Williamson. The engagement is announced between Martin, elder son of Mr E. Steeuw, of Holland, and the late Rosemary Gurney, of Canada, and Emma, daughter of Mr and Mrs A.R. Williamson, of Merton, Norfolk.

BIRTHDAYS

TODAY: Miss Mary Allen, former chief executive, the Royal Opera House, 47; Mr Peter Alsop, publisher, 74; Sir John Banham, chairman, Tarmac, 58; Miss Honor Blackman, actress, 72; Mr Marc Bohan, dress designer, 72; Mr Ray Bradbury, writer, 78; Professor Sir Colin Buchanan, town planner, 81; Dr Rob Buckman, broadcaster, 50; M Henri Cartier-Bresson, photo-

grapher, 90; Maj-Gen Earl Cathcart, 79; Professor Sir Cyril Astley Clarke, geneticist, 91; Mr Steve Davis, snooker player, 41; Miss Margaret Douglas, supervisor of Parliamentary Broadcasting, 64; Miss Anne Downey, circuit judge, 62; Mr Derek Fatchett MP, Minister of State, Foreign Office, 53; Mr Wilfred Harrison, actor, director and playwright, 73; Mr Max Hebditch, former Director of the Museum of London, 61; Mr Kelvin Hopkins MP, 57; Mr Gerald Long, journalist and former chief executive, Reuters, 75; Mr Donald MacLeary, dancer, 61; The Right Rev Robert Martineau, former Bishop of Blackburn, 85; Sir James Menter, former Principal, Queen Mary College, 77; Mr Alan Michael MP, Minister of State, Home Office, 55; Sir Leo Piatzky, former senior civil servant, 79; General Norman Schwarzkopf, former US military commander,

64; Mr Karlheinz Stockhausen, composer and conductor, 70; Mr David Taylor MP, 52; Sir Anthony Tuke, former chairman, Savoy Hotel, 78; Mr Mals Wlender, tennis player, 34.

TOMORROW: Mr Richard Addis, former Editor, *The Express*, 42; Mr Graeme Bowler, chief executive, Kwik Save, 61; Mr Christopher Blake, actor, 49; Mr Dale Campbell-Savours MP, 55; Mr Geoff Capes, shot putter, 49; Sir Alan Cox, former chief executive, ASW Holdings, 62; Sir Robert Crichton-Brown, former chairman, Rothmans International, 79; Ms Julia Drown MP, 36; Sir John Fairclough, former chief scientific adviser to the Cabinet Office, 68; Mr Alexander Gilmore, director, South West London Community Foundation, 67; Mr Roger Greenaway, popular song composer, 60; Sir John Hoskyns, former chairman,

of Stalingrad began, 1942; the World Council of Churches was founded, 1948.

TOMORROW: Births: William Ernest Henley, poet and critic, 1849; Edgar Lee Masters, poet and novelist, 1869; Ernst Krenek, composer, 1900; Leonard Constant Lambert, composer and critic, 1905; Gene Kelly (Eugene Curran Kelly), dancer and singer, 1912.

Deaths: Sir William Wallace, Scottish patriot, executed 1305; Philip Henry Gosse, naturalist, 1888; Oscar Hammerstein II, lyricist, 1960; Lancelot Thomas Hogben, scientific writer, 1975.

On this day: Hong Kong was taken by the British, 1839; the Albert Bridge across the Thames at Chelsea was opened, 1873; the Soviet-German Non-Aggression Pact was signed, 1939; the Battle

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Burton Group, and Emap, 71; Air Chief Marshal Sir Brendan Jackson, former Air Member for Supply and Organisation, Ministry of Defence, 63; Mr Stanley Kitchen, chartered accountant, 65; Mr Peter Lilley MP, 55; Mr Ted Maidment, Headmaster, Shrewsbury School, 56; Mr Christopher Martin, former Headmaster, Millfield School, 60; Mr Jim Murphy MP, 31; Dr Onora O'Neill, Principal, Newnham College, Cambridge, 57; Sir Brian Pearce, chairman, LucasVarity, 65; Mr Bob Peck, actor, 53; Mr James Quinn, film producer, 79; Mr David Robb, actor, 51; Mr Willy Russell, writer and playwright, 51; Sir Roy Strong, writer and historian, 63; Mr Peter Thomson, golfer, 69; Field Marshal Lord Vincent of Coleshill, former chairman of Military Committee, Nato, 87; Mr Charles Wardle MP, 58; Sir Brian Young, former chairman, Christian Aid, 76.

Lubricious gossip aside there have been other surprising features about this whole saga. In particular the way that the President's religious seconds seem almost to have been rooting for him between rounds - from the Rev Jesse Jackson to the Thomas Merton lookalike (complete with scapular) looking beatifically on as Bill and Hillary left Washington's Foundry United Methodist Church before the public confessing began.

Pardon me, but given the conspicuous presidential church-going, bible-carrying, and trumpeting of wholesome family values shouldn't one of them have said something, er... prophetic? It was as if they were subscribing *en masse* to the late Malcolm Muggeridge's view of the Ten Commandments. The Sage of Robertsbridge, you may remember, had once opined that these were best likened to an examination paper prefaced with the rubric "Only eight to be attempted" (the presidential preference inclining presumably towards the omission of numbers 7 and 8).

Not that one would expect one's allies to be the first to put the boot in. Ministers, after all, are there to offer pastoral support in times of need. But why has it been left to politicians and secular commentators to lead the moral charge? Doesn't the church to which the leader of

the free world so publicly belongs have something distinctive to say about this? Shouldn't it have something distinctive to say?

And then there was all that highly publicised praying shortly before the President gave his testimony. We will never know how Messrs Jackson and Clinton addressed the Almighty nor what precise prayer the two of them offered up, but to the cynical it seemed like an 11th-hour request for something pretty damned miraculous to get somebody off the hook.

Don't get me wrong. I'm all for prayer. I believe it does

Memo to the President: put that bible away, Bill

ONE OF the daffier undergraduate observations of the Nixon era was the fact that Spiro Agnew (one-time Vice-President) was an anagram of "grow a penis". In those days, however, such inky-fingered ribaldry was for private consumption only. Now it has become the stuff of public discourse and the President of the United States, no less, has given us all a licence to discuss oral sex, DNA material, "inappropriate behaviour" etc, etc, with as much candour as we can muster. To such an extent that explaining the Clinton and Lewinsky affair to our suddenly attentive children after the early evening news has become a delicate balancing act.

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FAITH & REASON

TREVOR BARNES

Bill Clinton has to choose between being pious and presidential. It is his attempt to have it both ways that has got him into such a mess

soothe the troubled heart and can get you out of a tight corner at times. At times. Not every time. And often when you least expect it. That, too, is another matter.

No, what is hard to take is the public display of private devotion in a way that instantly invites a charge of hypocrisy and tars other struggling churchgoers with the same brush, giving ammunition to every militant atheist and bar-room philosopher in the land to sneer with derisive incredulity at the transparently shifty ways of the faithful.

Taking refuge in carefully drafted legalisms was not guaranteed to impress a public hoping (against every indication and precedent, it has to

be said) for honesty and genuine contrition from the TV confessional. And what does it tell the world about Christianity and sex? Not much that's edifying that's for sure. About all it does say is that it's possible, if you'll pardon the phrase, to get off on a technicality. After all, this particular piece of "inappropriateness" could not be classed as adultery because it could not be classed as sex at all. Oh yeah? Try telling that to a partner who isn't a lawyer.

The Clinton affair has coincided neatly with the publication of a book that has become a surprise best-seller in New York: the collected epigrams of the 73-year-old former baseball star of the New York Yankees, Yogi Berra. The wit and wisdom of this unlikely wordsmith (the model, it's said, for the cartoon figure Yogi Bear) have felt uncannily apt this week. His much-quoted "It's déjà vu all over again" could have been tailor-made for this latest high-level revelation. But better still is the advice he once gave a stranger asking for directions. Deployed in a different context it had the authentic ring of the White House spin doctor schooling an all too fallen president in the art of obfuscation. You can almost hear a smart presidential adviser quoting it verbatim. "When you come to a fork in the road, take it."

Didn't the Southern Baptists teach him that the truth would set us free? Of course such towering simplicities are fine in principle. Those charged with running a country or confronting the realities of political power may find them harder to put into practice. And even a halfway educated or experienced electorate would have every sympathy with that.

They can forgive an occasional (if sometimes spectacular) fall from grace. What is harder to stomach is this hybrid of admission and denial which seeks to make Clinton's behaviour palatable to two mutually exclusive constituencies but succeeds in making it acceptable to neither.

When Immortals strode the stage

THE OTHER night after the performance of *Chimes at Midnight*, Sir Alec Guinness came backstage to say hello. It is astonishing and touching that in his eighties he still finds the theatre fascinating, and is often to be seen padding into the stalls at a West End matinee, sometimes braving the wilder shores of the avant-garde. *Hope springs eternal*, I suppose.

His presence at Chichester was galvanising, not so much because of his manner, which is unfailingly gracious and charming – courtly, even – but because of what he represents. He is, for actors, one of the Immortals. Whether from experience or by reputation, we all know and revere performances he has given across six decades.

The Immortals form a very small club. There is an even more senior Immortal, Sir John Gielgud, and a somewhat junior one, Paul Scofield. Are they the Last of the Immortals? They probably are.

It is worth pondering the situation. The glories of the British theatre have rested on three factors: training, experience and tradition – all undermined. Guinness is particularly plugged into the tradition, having been a protégé of Gielgud's; Gielgud, in fact, sponsored him to go to drama school.

He quickly established himself as a uniquely interesting character actor of a new and highly original kind, relying on none of the usual repertoire of voices and noses, but somehow transforming from within, making himself as it seemed a different actor for each new role. He gave a revolutionary performance of the part of Hamlet in a modern-dress production by Tyrone Guthrie. He was part of possibly the most extraordinary team of actors ever assembled in a British theatre, the Old Vic company of the Thirties and mid-Forties. His fellow players included Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Laurence Olivier, Joyce Redman, Margaret Leighton, Peggy Ashcroft, Edith Evans.

It was this generation that dominated the theatre through the Forties, Fifties and Sixties. It was, you might say, a thespocentric theatre: actors were the starting point of the work and very often its final destination. The establishment of the Royal Court, the writers' theatre, was a conscious revolt against this, though many of those leading actors – Guinness, Ashcroft, Olivier – were quick to appear there; it had been founded, after all, by one of the key members of the Old Vic, George Devine.

With the creation of the Royal Shakespeare Company and the National Theatre, many of the pre-war generation were absorbed into these organisations,

SIMON CALLOW



committing themselves to the establishment of real ensembles comparable to the Comédie Française and the Berliner Ensemble. This was the world in which I grew up, where the principle of subsidy had finally been acknowledged, a seeming new dawn for acting and the theatre.

The dawn came, and it was good; but by high noon something unexpected seemed to have happened. Despite the development from within the ranks of remarkable talents – (at random) Mike Gambon, Anthony Hopkins and Derek Jacobi at the National Theatre, Alan Howard, Helen Mirren, Janet Suzman at the RSC – there was little sense of the exceptional excitement that had attended the work of the actors of the previous generation.

When those actors attempted something in that line – Olivier his Othello and Shylock, Gielgud his Oedipus, Redgrave his Uncle Vanya, Ashcroft her Winnie in *Happy Days* – there was the same old sense of something truly important, unforgettable, revealed; but when the subsequent generation attempted these roles, there was something missing. Clearly this was nothing to do with absence of talent or intelligence; on the contrary, there had never been such thought and conceptual ingenuity. Perhaps there was too much.

James Bridie, bearing Flora Robson for her Old Vic Lady Macbeth (opposite Charles Laughton in 1934), had written to her that she should steer clear of psychology. "In which you are an amateur. Your job," he told her, "is to flick Lady Macbeth through your soul." This sense of being in the presence, not of an interpretation, but of a primal force, was elusive, and somehow actors seemed to lose the belief that they were doing something fundamentally important by playing these parts. The theatre was a place where you paid your dues, but not where the earth truly moved. You were down there on a visit; it was not where you lived.

We all feel this, all of us who appear on stage. It is, to continue a parallel from last week's column, very like the church of today. God is still there, presumably; but instead of answering an inherent appetite, those of us who work in both church and theatre are desperately trying to create the appetite, signalling and waving. It is an odd mind-set.

The truth about Potter

Dennis Potter cursed the literary biography as 'fact' posing as 'lies'. So the new biography of the late playwright portrays him as an egotistical monster. Well, what did he expect? By John Cook



In 1996's *'Cold Lazarus'* (above) Potter (below) gave his fictional alter ego a curious death bed cry: 'No biography!'

ARE WE about to see the trashing of Dennis Potter? The *Sunday Times* is currently serialising "exclusive extracts" from a new Faber biography by Humphrey Carpenter (one of its regular book reviewers) – lurid allegations surrounding the late writer's sex life, including obsessions, affairs and tales that he slept with more than 100 prostitutes.

But hang on. Didn't Faber used to be Potter's own publisher? And isn't *The Sunday Times* from the same Rupert Murdoch-owned stable whose standards Potter used to rail against? Most curiously of all, wasn't Carpenter supposed to be the "official" biographer, commissioned by Potter's own estate? Right on all counts. And there hangs an extraordinary literary tale.

In his final TV drama, 1996's *Cold Lazarus*, Potter gave his fictional alter ego, Daniel Feeld, a curious death-bed cry. The cancer-stricken writer ranted it with all the force he could muster for his last script:

"More and more discernible and hideously upsetting, a head seems to float in liquid nitrogen... and the mouth is trying to make word-shapes."

DANIEL: (Off near-scream): No biography!

Regardless of any truth in Potter's fiction, there are also the writer's own pronouncements. For example, in a lengthy 1990 interview, he told me: "I despise biographies. They're hidden novels... And I do think that biographical criticism is such an easy way of assuming you get... the key to a body of work. I just know that that is not the case."

So why did his estate ignore his views? According to Carpenter,

Potter "was a very manipulative subject" who "accepted" at the end that a biography would be written. As for the death cry in *Cold Lazarus*, Carpenter shrugs off any connection between the work and the life in this particular case, seeing it as one of the great "literary jokes" from a man who spent his career writing about his life or talking about it to interviewers.

Potter talked so much about himself because he believed people today had "lost sight of what fiction is". He told me he self-consciously manipulated his own autobiography in order to draw audiences in to attend to what he regarded as the "deeper" spiritual themes of his writing. In essence, he was a religious dramatist (albeit a highly unorthodox one) – an explorer of spiritual questions who rejected the naturalistic world of "fact"-finding as "lies", after seeing how an early documentary he made on his beloved Forest of Dean had distorted the "deeper" truth he knew to be there.

Potter's estate, upset that the biography paints such an unpleasant picture, has not co-operated in a documentary made to promote it. It is to be produced by the BBC; the institution to which Potter devoted his life and his passion. His own publisher, his own estate, even his beloved BBC – all working to promote a biography he would never have wanted.

And the reason? Biographies sell. We are now in an age where writers' lives have become far more important than their work. Biographies have become the new tabloids of the chattering classes and all biographers know the rules of the game: if you dig up enough "dirt", the press will serialise your work and you will

get rich. The temptations for sensationalism and distortion are enormous. The public craves artistic meaning, but with critical studies hived off to the universities as too "difficult", biography fills the gap and figures like Carpenter thrive. Yet readers often find themselves short-changed as they find an artist's work reduced to a few simple tropes



of their sex life. If E.M. Forster were alive today, Potter argued in his brilliant 1993 Edinburgh MacTaggart lecture, the Murdoch press would brand him "an artsy-fartsy old poof". Five years later, it's Potter's own turn to receive such treatment.

It seems that at the end he was aware his reputation was at stake. *Cold Lazarus* is about a media mogul who wants to raid the cryogenic memories of a helpless writer for public titillation and private profit. And it is through the replaying of the "no biography" cry that scientists of the future realise Daniel Feeld is self-aware and does not want to end up diminished and exploited. As they dig deeper, the scientists

also realise Feeld's memories are "no biography", but inherently subjective. There are real bits of his life but a lot of fantasy too. This goes to the very heart of Potter as writer. The truth about the man is not in the "facts" of his life but there in his fictions, if we only care to look. In order for a biography to work, Potter now must be portrayed as simply a "manipulative games-player", one whose anti-biographical pronouncements concealed a secret authorial game of hide and seek which the biographer can then uncover.

Yet when I put precisely that early theory to him, Potter replied: "All right, you're attracted by this game of hide and seek. That's fair enough for a little way... but to love it too much is to obscure and not see what else is there." Potter hinted there was something more. The danger is that it is this which will be dismissed now he is gone. The complex fiction will be read as simple autobiography and people will turn away from the work. The biography will have replaced the drama.

Yet the truth is much more interesting than sensational headlines about his sex life. The prostitute tales, for example, are unreliable, stemming from a period before he wrote any of his plays when, first ill at 26 with a skin disease, it is clear he suffered some kind of breakdown. Meanwhile, what the stories of later sexual obsessions fail to mention was that Potter was often more romantic dreamer than dirty old man, longing to return to a youth before the onset of disease. Sometimes, what seemed to be sexual fixations were actually painful romantic infatuations for a lost past.

Potter's was a life of great physical suffering and trauma which he eventually learned to transcend through his writing. Disease could sometimes make him extremely irritable and he often got up the noses of colleagues. Some of them, one feels, are now getting their revenge. Yet because of illness, Potter didn't have much of a life: in many ways, his work was his life. This is why an "official" biography seems particularly half-baked. Several advance readers have noticed that other than as a collection of facts, the new biography doesn't have much to say about Potter's work. Hence the hyping of the sexual aspects.

While it is important not to romanticise him, Potter does not deserve demonisation. Anyone who saw his final interview will know he stood for something more than sensationalist fodder. It is important that alternative views are put across, for to trash Potter is also, implicitly, to trash his cherished hopes for democratic public broadcasting.

Others, one suspects, know this too. So when you read the sensationalist headlines in the next few weeks, pause for a moment. See the hidden motivations and agendas for what they are. Then make up your own mind about Dennis Potter.

John Cook lectures in Media at De Montfort University, Leicester. The revised second edition of his critical study of Potter's work, *Dennis Potter: A Life on Screen*, will be published by Manchester University Press in September. The BBC film *Dennis Potter: Under the Skin* will be broadcast on 9 September.

THE WEEK ON RADIO

REVIEWED BY
ROBERT HANKS

THERE ARE few things that unite us more than poop, as Natalie Wheen remarked, taking in the smells at a sewage farm in *The Influence of Effluent* (Radio 4, Monday): "It's the same in Calcutta and it's the same in Boston. It reminds you that the human family is all basically up to the same... works."

The pause before the final euphemism gave you some sense of the strain involved in excremental talk we all do it but we still have to pause and acknowledge the embarrassment every now and then. But it was

to Wheen's credit that only once or twice in this programme – the first of three on the subject, which is ambitious – did she show even remote signs of coyness. She is perhaps not the gentlest or warmest personality on radio, but if you were stuck on a lifeboat and suffering acute appendicitis, you'd want somebody as frankly unquarrelsome and as unbothered by the niceties as she is at the other end of the broken pen-knife.

Most of this first part of *The Influence of Effluent* was no-nonsense factual stuff, touching on such

topics as why it's brown (waste-products from red blood cells), the earliest sewage systems (Minoan Crete), the invention of the water-closet (Sir John Harrington, 1594), and the opening of London's sewage system in 1865. It was entirely natural that this last subject dominated the programme: London's drains are by all accounts a mammoth achievement of civil engineering, and a reminder that poop can also be an occasion for patriotic pride.

But alongside the factual stuff, the programme took time to notice that

excrement can be horrifying, or simply horrid (at one point in the sewage farm, Wheen took time to exclaim: "That's a bit strong – what have they been eating?"). More dangerously, it admitted dung's

strange fascination, through some of Jonathan Swift's extensive writings on the subject: "There is no man that ever was so humble as to observe human ordure, but must confess there is a wonderful variety in all production of this nature..." Altogether, this was an agreeably solid, well-formed programme, and a change from the sloppy stuff Radio 4 has been pushing out lately.

Later the same evening, and also not for sensitive stomachs, came *It's Just Like Watching Brazil*, Ian McMillan's verse documentary

about Barnsley FC's first season in the Premier League. There were some moments of pure, stomach-churning McGonagall in here, with the fans (played by McMillan, Barrie Rutter and Michelle Hardwick) chanting: "And some of us are ancient, And some of us are young, And we make the ritual noise from the collective lung." Or the comment made on the opening match of the season against West Ham: "The unthinkable happened and we took the lead! Oh, this was truly life indeed" – a line that even Rutter's

savage enthusiasm was unable to rescue from bathos.

But sentimental and pedestrian though much of the verse was, it fitted its subject. The commonplace emotions of ordinary football fans, inspired by an ordinary team in a run-down Northern town – somehow conspiring to produce a kind of communal ecstasy, a thrill that poetry will never be adequate to capture. McMillan gave some sense of how the workaday can sometimes metamorphose into the indescribable; you couldn't ask for more than that.

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

— THE SATURDAY REVIEW, PAGE 14 —

HOWARD HODGKIN



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CLASSIC CARTOONS

MARTIN PLIMMER
ON
ANDRÉ FRANÇOIS

The naive, just-dashed-off style of the Romanian artist, André François, who contributed to *Punch*, *New Yorker*, *Life* and *Esquire* before concentrating on painting in 1960, had a leavening effect on the British cartoon scene, particularly influencing Ronald Searle and Quentin Blake. François' concerns are personal and particular, depicting the goings-on of artists, centaurs and tattooed elephants. In conception they are sometimes weak, but in style and composition they carry a strong charge. In this apparently careless piece, the bevy of wishful men seeking after for a naked woman in the foreground, is really just a charming distraction in a greater picture where boats ply and steeples fly and time laps by with gratifying ease.



Ronald Searle

Quentin Blake

THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPH



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EDINBURGH FESTIVAL '98

New moves from an old master

Dutch choreographer Hans Van Manen is the grand old revolutionary of ballet who brought nudity and high heels to its classical form. So expect the unexpected in his new tango. By John Perceval

Hans van Manen has one of those commanding, lived-in faces that look out from the paintings of Dutch Old Masters. You might expect him to be dour and reserved, but instead he is friendly, enthusiastic, funny and always alert to new ideas.

He is a man who has made a success of everything he has tried. As World War Two ended, he took his first job in the theatre, at the age of 13, as a make-up artist, and won a prize for it. He always wanted to be a dancer and made his stage debut three months after he began studying. Soon he had solo roles but by then he wanted to make ballets too, and at 25, with several creations to his name, he helped found what soon became a leading company, the Netherlands Dance Theatre, which he also co-directed through its first, immensely successful decade.

He has gone on to make well over a hundred ballets, danced by companies all round the world. And as if that was not enough to keep him busy in 1973, he took up photography with such success that some of his pictures are in the Amsterdam City Museum and others are best-sellers in art postcard shops, while his exhibitions have included one at the Pompidou Centre in Paris.

On Monday, the Edinburgh Festival opens a unique tribute to him: a week of performances assembling three Dutch dance companies to show a range of his work, from the 1965 *Metaphors* to a new tango ballet having its premiere next Friday.

It was almost 40 years ago that Holland burst on to the European dance scene as one of the most active and influential ballet centres. There were two major companies who toured widely and Sadler's Wells was one of their regular homes and they attracted guest stars of Nureyev's calibre, sent their choreographers and designers to create works for the Royal Ballet among others, and set such an example of creativity that Britain's old-established Ballet Rambert changed its style in imitation, taking the first steps towards becoming today's Rambert Dance Company.

America's greatest choreographers — Martha Graham, George Balanchine and Jerome Robbins — were the inspiration for the new generation in Holland, but their own young talent led the way. Hans van Manen is one of the pioneers and now the doyen, although at 66 he is still so active that to call him the grand old man is insulting. He is also, since Robbins's death, almost certainly the best ballet choreographer working anywhere today.



The Dutch National Ballet in '5 Tangos', choreographed by Hans Van Manen, still one of the pioneers of ballet

Jorge Fatauros

Van Manen is like the Dutch Old Masters in that he does not tell stories but shows you people in a situation, using dancers and stage design instead of dancers and paint. The audience is free to read its own interpretation into what it sees, just as Van Manen once explained that he loved watching people — in a room or on the street — and imagining what they might be thinking or talking about. One of his ballets, *Situation*, took this to its extreme by

putting a room on stage and showing one couple after another coming in, reacting lustfully, fearfully or aggressively to one another, then leaving while a clock ticked away as a reminder of actuality.

Again and again he has been a pioneer. He was the first choreographer to use nudity in a serious ballet (*Oheditions*), and the first to incorporate video sequences, both live and recorded, into a ballet (*Live*). He once accepted the challenge to create a ballet from scratch in a single day and have it performed in public that night (*Ready Made*).

In *Twilight*, he had the ballerina raised on high heels instead of point shoes; the effect when she took them off and jumped at her partner was as startlingly erotic as if she had undressed entirely. In *TW*, he had the

Stravinsky score played twice, setting the same dances for different numbers the second time round.

Generally, he prefers to use modern music, as varied as John Cage piano pieces and Astor Piazzolla tangos, but sometimes he turns back to Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn and even Bach. His costumes are always modern, but striking and imaginative, not ordinary clothes; the women may sometimes wear ballet shoes but have never been in tutus.

However, who knows? Edinburgh audiences should check in their preconceptions at the cloakroom and keep their wits about them.

The Dutch National Ballet is at the Edinburgh Playhouse, 24-26 Aug, and the Festival Theatre on 29th and 30th Aug. (0131-473 2003)

A SHORT HISTORY OF DUTCH BALLET

1642 — Ballet first given in Amsterdam; The Hague follows in the 1690s.

1761 onwards — Dutch ballet flourishes under several choreographers, including Andries van Hamme, who made no fewer than 115 three-act ballets in 40 years — possibly an all-time record.

1890 onwards — Local talent eclipsed as Anna Pavlova, Isadora Duncan and other visitors thrive. Pavlova dies in The Hague, 1931.

1945 — Scapino Ballet started to entertain children; still going strong in Rotterdam for wider audiences.

1959 — Netherlands Dance Theatre started in The Hague by a break-

away group of dancers wanting more adventurous programmes. Van Manen is artistic director.

1961 — The National Ballet started in Amsterdam by a merger of previously competing groups.

1963 — Dance Theatre's first British season.

1969 — The National's first British season.

1978 — Dance Theatre adds a second company, NDT2, for younger dancers and in 1991 adds a third, NDT3, for older dancers.

1986 — The National moves into a big new home, the Muziekth.

1988 — Dance Theatre opens its own purpose-built theatre.

Cook returns in a 'wistful' way

"I WENT to a Nazi school. It's a little known fact that Hitler founded a number of schools in England. They've been dismantled since the war. All except Harrow." Anyone can imitate Peter Cook's E L Wisty, but few, I suspect, could speak with his voice as surely as Matthew Perret in *Play Wisty for Me*, a two-man show about Cook's life and work.

Every line of the play (by Perret and his fellow performer Jeremy Limb) is completely new, but it often sounds like undiscovered material. Sir Arthur Street-Grebling lives again: "Women are like licorice allsorts. Some you chew, some you suck and some you say 'Get out of my life you harried and take your pine furniture with you'."

In addition to reincarnating

THEATRE

PLAY WISTY FOR ME

Wisty, Street-Grebling, and Derek and Clive, the show attempts to set the record straight on a life that many persist in viewing as wasted.

When Cook died in 1965, after many years largely spent in a haze of drugs and alcohol, Stephen Fry made a furious attack on his life. Who had written reports on his life. Matthew Perret in the character of Street-Grebling makes a similar defence: "They say that I haven't fulfilled my potential. I fulfilled my potential by the time I was 25!"

The show also addresses the conflict between Pete and Dud in a

deliciously spiteful reworking of the one-legged Tarzan audition in which Pete wonders whether "a club-footed short-arse from Dagenham" is a suitable candidate for Hollywood stardom.

Each pastiche is used to tell us more about Cook himself. The piece is a little uneven — opening and closing with the collapse of Cook doesn't really work — but it doesn't outstay its welcome and individual gags are sometimes hilarious.

Ultimately, the play seems unable (or unwilling) to decide whether Cook's later years were a tragic waste or not. But that's fair enough. I can't decide either.

LOUISE LEVENE

At Pleasance to 31 August

Hearing voices at the Festival

SOMETIMES, if not very often, you get real value for money at the Festival: two comedians for the price of one. Crammed into the Queen's Hall, the audience was first treated to the kind of understudy who should, really, have a show of his own.

Milton Jones' very personal and quirky brand of humour may not be everybody's full Monty, but some of his jokes are so silly, you have to laugh. "One month before my grandfather passed away, my grandmother covered his back in lard. He went down-hill very quickly from there." Simply switch your brain to totally zany mode, sit back and don't try to fight it. Silly can be funny.

Rory Bremner needs no introduction, and neither do his impressions. "I don't know how he manages

COMEDY

RORY BREMNER

QUEEN'S HALL

to slip from one character to the next with such ease," whispered my neighbour after a few minutes. From Donald Dewar, to Tony Blair, Martin Bell, Murray Walker or Jeremy Paxman, Bremner creates his own, instantly recognisable celebrity world. And that's his great strength. Rather than simply performing a series of random impressions, he carefully leads up to each sequence, before linking the character with a topical news item. You get the impression that every character, once mastered, is like a puppet. Bremner is inside pulling the strings,

showing us the vulnerable, human side of our politicians and stars.

The highlight of the evening is Bill Clinton's address to the Nation. In it, he admits having a sexual relationship with Miss Lewinsky, but insists: "I did not inhale."

Bremner effortlessly guides you through a series of pastiches that are perfect caricatures of his victims. You feel it should also be a little nastier, a little bit more punchy. When my neighbour turned to me again (this time during the interval) to tell me Bremner "has a way with words", I agreed. Then again, if anyone should know about vowels and consonants, it is Richard Whiteley.

Ladies and gentlemen, Rory Bremner has left the festival.

ALEX RAYES

DAY PLANNER

YOUR HOUR-BY-HOUR GUIDE TO WHAT'S BEST AT THE FESTIVAL AND FRINGE

12 NOON

THEATRE
12.30-2.00 Richard III. Malachai Bogdanov's toddler version of the Shakespeare play may rob the characters of their full range, but the cast achieve the fusion of kindergarten and courtly intrigue with aplomb.
Pleasance, Venue 33, today and tomorrow, £8 (£6).

1PM

THEATRE
1.00-2.00 All Strange Away. The European premiere of Beckett's controversial play.
Pleasance Attic, Price £6.50 (£5.50). Until 31 Aug (not 24).

2PM

CHILDREN
2.00-3.30 The Nutcracker. Tchaikovsky's ballet with spectac-



Rich Hall: 8.30pm

ular giant puppets. South Leith Parish Church Halls (venue 180), Henderson Street. Until 29 Aug (not 23).

3PM

COMEDY
3.00-4.00 Richard Whiteley: Teatime Chat With Richard. More cardigan-friendly chat belimed by Countdown's intellectual dynamo. Guests so far have included Howard Marks.
Pleasance Over the Road, £7 (£6). Until 31 Aug (not 25).

4PM

THEATRE
4.15-5.15 Tamogochi Heaven. Adults-only tragicomic tale of a woman and her cyberpet. Pleasance (venue 33), 60 The Pleasance (556 6550). Price £6.50 (£5.50). Until 31 Aug.

5PM

COMEDY
5.55-6.45 Universal Grinding Wheel. Surreal anti-standup. Pleasance Below. Price £6.50 (£5.50). Until 31 Aug (not 24).

7PM

DANCE
7.20-10.20 Destino Tango. With Dutch maestros Sexteto Canyengue and dancers Club Tango 5. Graffiti (venue 90), corner of Broughton and East London Streets (557 8330). Price £8.50

8PM

COMEDY
8.15-9.15 Mark Doherty: Fascinating Things. Unique, surreal standup. Pleasance (venue 33), 60 The Pleasance (556 6550). Price £7.50 (£6.50). 20, 23, 25-27 Aug.

COMEDY

8.30-9.30 Rich Hall. "Grouchy, deadpan, comic, bastard, genius." Diatribe against America by one of her own. Very funny. The Observer Assembly (venue 3), Assembly Rooms, 54 George Street. Price £9 (£8). Until 30 Aug.

9PM

COMEDY
9.00-10.00 Jason Byrne. Frenetic and lunatic humour from one of this year's serious Perrier contenders. The king of off-the-cuff, he takes look-at-me petulance to an art form.



Junior Simpson: 9.45pm

His first solo Edinburgh show. Pleasance (venue 33). Price £7.50 (£6.50). Until 31 Aug.

COMEDY

9.25-10.25 Al Murray: the Pub Landlord, Keeper of the Pint Cosmic. Cruelly denied the Perrier Award on two previous occasions, Murray returns for a third stint behind the bar with his acute observations on just what it means to be male and British. Not to be missed. Pleasance (venue 33). Price £8.50 (£7.50). Until 31 Aug (not 25).

COMEDY

9.45-10.45 Junior Simpson. More up-to-the minute material from the popular stand-up who dares to tackle issues such as the fiasco surrounding the Stephen Lawrence trial. Assembly Rooms, to 30 Aug. £9-£10 (£8-£9).

10PM

COMEDY
10.15-11.15 The League Against Teddium. Simon Munro's megamaniacal creation — an antidote to middle-of-the-road comedy blues and an outside bet for this year's Perrier Award. Pleasance Above (venue 33). Price £8-£9 (£7-£8). Until 31 Aug (not 25).

11PM

THEATRE
11.15-12.25 Derevo. The Russian mime company returns to the Fringe with a new show. Pleasance, to 31 Aug. £7.50-£8.50.

TICKET OFFERS

Take a copy of today's Independent to one of the venues below:

The Pleasance (venue 33)

Five pairs of tickets for the first five at the box-office. Subject to availability.

7.50-9.10pm: Jordan — Haunting, thrilling and deeply moving play by Anna Reynolds and Moria Buffini (Pleasance Two).

Calder's Glided Balloon (venue 38)

Five pairs of tickets for each show. Subject to availability.


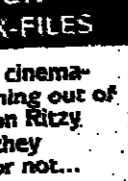





1.15-2.15pm: Molotov Cocktail — Hope Springs A Leak (Backstage 2)

12.45-2.15pm: Tim Bray — Me And My Vice (Backstage 1)

THE WEEK IN REVIEW

BY FIONA STURGES



OVERVIEW	CRITICAL VIEW	OUR VIEW	ON VIEW	YOUR VIEW...	
THE FILM THE X-FILES  <p>Horrific viruses, scheming extra-terrestrials and sinister government plots abound as director Rob Bowman directs David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson, aka agents Mulder and Scully, to the big screen.</p>	<p>"No blockbuster worth the title courts anything less threatening than full-scale apocalypse, and <i>The X-Files</i> buys into this, though to little purpose," noted a disgruntled Ryan Gilbey. "Only those who remember the <i>Ice Age</i> are likely to be unsettled by the film's threat of global extinction." <i>The Big Issue</i> found it "beefed up beyond its natural weight: striving for conventional epic bulk when</p>	<p>the original appeal always lay in its tight surrounds and character-driven drama," while <i>Time Out</i> muttered, "to the neophyte who wouldn't know <i>The Cigarette Smoking Man</i> if he asked for a light, it will make little sense." "The truth is out there all right - way off the screen," grumbled the <i>Daily Mail</i>. "Feast for conspiracy theorist, thinner diet for others."</p>	<p>A disappointingly incoherent plot shapes this extravagant version of the cult TV series, though the familiar Mulder-Scully frissons (they nearly kiss), glossy special effects and conspiratorial sub-text will no doubt satiate the <i>X-File</i> aficionado.</p>	<p>On general release from yesterday. Certificate 15. 122 minutes. You can also catch Mulder and Scully on video in <i>Potential: X-File 11</i>, priced £14.99.</p>	<p>ON THE X-FILES <p>We asked cinema-goers coming out of the Britton Ritz whether they believed or not...</p><p>GARETH KELLY 28, social worker, South Norwood. "I enjoyed the series and the film was just as gripping. The question of who is in charge of what conspiracy was especially interesting."</p></p>
THE PROGRAMME THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS  <p>In anticipation of the anniversary of Diana's death, Kelvin McKenzie's dramatised account of the Princess's final year, on Channel 5. Starring blond bombshells Amy Secombe, Rory Jennings and Freddy Sayers.</p>	<p>"Singling out the lapses of taste... would be as pointless as trying to detect fly spots on a cow pat," noted Tom Sutcliffe. "Kelvin McKenzie's debut as a television producer... was awe-inspiringly bad, a Grand Canyon of dramatic trash." "The <i>Duchess of Malfi</i> it was not," quipped <i>The Daily Telegraph</i>. "For two hours, actors rigid with embarrassment struck Madame Tussaud poses and recited lines</p>	<p>which could have been cuttings from <i>Heaven</i>!" "An unmissably tactless piece of tack that made <i>Dynasty</i> look like Dostoevsky - a kind of Royal Crossroads," expostulated the <i>Evening Standard</i>, while the <i>Daily Mail</i> warned "Stand by for more of the same as August 31."</p>	<p>approaches." A ludicrously naff (though unintentionally hilarious) tribute to Diana, this appalling drama marks yet another calamity for the</p>	<p>beleaguered Channel 5.</p> <p>There are no more planned transmissions of Channel 5's drama. BBC tribute programmes include <i>Diana: One Year On</i> (5.50-6.30pm, BBC 1) and <i>The</i></p>	<p>MIKE HUNT 20, student, Cardiff. "I thought it was slow and predictable. Same old rubbish - it does my head in."</p>
THE EXHIBITION PIOTR UKLANSKI  <p>A controversial new exhibition by Polish artist Piotr Uklanski containing 100 photographs taken from Hollywood films in which male actors, from Terry Thomas to Marlon Brando, wear Nazi uniforms.</p>	<p>"It's not often that you can write the words 'Berthold Brecht' and 'knockabout fun' in the same sentence," clamoured Paul Taylor. "With mad, penetrating eyes, distraught hair and a silly moustache, McColl's Puntilla finds a perfect physical foil in the thick-set, calmly subversive Foley." "An entertaining, but also plunkingly didactic evening," dithered <i>The Times</i>, while the <i>Daily Mail</i> praised</p>	<p>a balletic, poetic production with jaunty, ironic songs and a facade of barn doors whose metallic structure collapses in an amazing scenic coup for the finale." Even <i>The Daily Telegraph</i> admitted that "there is inevitably a bitter political pill to swallow, but I have never known Brecht so beguiling... my po-faced disapproval repeatedly gave way to a good time."</p>	<p>Theatre de Complicite's Kathryn Hunter and The Right Size have transformed heavy-duty Brecht into well-observed and exuberant satire à la Morecambe and Wise. By far the best thing you will see at the Fringe this year.</p>	<p>Traverse Theatre, Edinburgh (0131-228 3223) until 5 Sept. Then tours Everyman Theatre, Liverpool (0151-709 4776), 8-12 Sept; Oxford Playhouse (01865 798600) 29 Sept-12 Oct; Almeida Theatre, London N1 (0171-359 4404) 13-31 Oct</p>	<p>SIMON BUTLER 30, Sports Development Officer, Bristol. "Unusual in the way the characters interact. The tension between Mulder and Scully reminds me a little bit of 'Moonlighting'."</p>
THE ALBUM  <p>Following their successful debut album <i>Come Find Yourself</i>, the New York rap trio release their much-anticipated second album, <i>100% Colombian</i>, featuring their hit tribute to soul star Barry White, "Love Unlimited".</p>	<p>"[The band] finally pin down that air of consensual roguery in a way which <i>Come Find Yourself</i> never managed," praised Andy Gill. "Slinking and sensual, their laid-back funk grooves have a supremely relaxed persistence." "The group evoke the steamy flavour of New York streetlife without losing any of their goofy humour," applauded <i>The Daily Mail</i>. <i>The Guardian</i> disagreed: "Huey, Fast and</p>	<p>Steve seem to have started taking themselves too seriously... the result being some kind of nightmare three-headed Luther Vandross." "They've toned down the samplings, turned up the guitars and gone a tad deep on us," noted <i>The Big Issue</i>, but conceded, "Elsewhere Huey's street fables of murder, police chases and sex are peppered up with a blistering rock guitar."</p>	<p>Significantly more serious than their rumbustious first album, <i>100% Colombian</i> reveals the Fun Lovin' Criminals to have matured a little too far beyond their years, though their tranquil rhythms and guitar-driven anthems are still as infectious as ever.</p>	<p>100% Colombian is released on Monday. The Fun Lovin' Criminals' first album, <i>Come Find Yourself</i>, is on sale now.</p>	<p>MARK DAVIES 34, Box Office Assistant, Brighton. "The special effects were much better than in the TV series. They had a bigger budget. As always, it poses more questions than it answers, which is why people enjoy it so much. I think, if you didn't know much about the series, I think you would be very bored. But I enjoyed it."</p>
THE FILM GADJO DILÓ  <p>The last in his award-winning gypsy trilogy, director Tony Gatlif follows the quest of a young Parisian, played by Romain Duris, to find Nora Luca, the gypsy singer his father listened to on his deathbed.</p>	<p>"There is a warmth and humour to the storytelling which makes redundant any accusations that [Gatlif] is packaging exotic images of a disenfranchised community for the delectations of Western cinema-goers," declared Ryan Gilbey. "Funny, enlivening, entertaining and moving," gushed <i>Time Out</i>, while <i>The Times</i> mumbled that it was "hard to dislike". "The film's leisurely approach is</p>	<p>jarred by eventual melodrama, but if you want something different, seek it out," pronounced the <i>Daily Mail</i>. "[Gatlif] deserves all the praise he has received for his unsimplistic portrayal of Romanian gypsies," observed <i>The Guardian</i>.</p>	<p>Because of his own gypsy origins, Tony Gatlif's take on Romanian gypsies is refreshingly unpatronising. The film sheds light on a marginalised culture in an imaginative and absorbing way, infused with a healthy measure of pathos.</p>	<p>You can see <i>Gadjo Dilo</i> at London's Renai, Brunswick Square, WC1. Subtitled, Cert 15, 101 minutes. For bookings and enquiries call 0171-837 8402. Other films by the director include <i>L'Amour</i> and <i>Les Princes</i>.</p>	
THE PLAY THE ROBBERS  <p>The Glasgow Citizen's revival of <i>The Robbers</i>, Friedrich Schiller's first play, which helped shape European Romanticism. Directed by Philip Prowse, Sophie Ward and Benedict Bates are the hero and heroine.</p>	<p>"There's a stunt-like quality to the doubling that sits easier in farce than in the turbulent solemnity of <i>Sturm und Drang</i> drama," complained Paul Taylor: "listening to him [Bates] deliver two roles alerts you to a lack of vocal variety." "Prowse's admirable cast resists the temptation to send up a play that is undeniably melodramatic," said <i>The Times</i>. "But do they compel a 20th century audi-</p>	<p>ence to take Schiller more seriously? That is another matter." "The mighty, mental landscape of Schiller's play has been trashed," spluttered the <i>Financial Times</i>, while the <i>Daily Telegraph</i> snarled, "Philip Prowse's production stubbornly fails to catch fire."</p>	<p>Exacerbated by the cardboard acting, this florid revival fails to convey the sobriety of Schiller's play.</p>	<p>There are no more performances of <i>The Robbers</i>, but there are rehearsed readings of Schiller's <i>The Maid of Orleans</i> today at 2pm and <i>Passion and Politics</i> tomorrow at 2pm, both at the Queen's Hall, Edinburgh (booking: 0131-473 2000).</p>	<p>NICKY KEENAN 25, Graphic Designer, Balham. "It went on too long. It was just crap basically."</p>

THE CHARTS

VINTAGE MOVIE POSTERS

The glamour of Holly Golightly helps ensure that *Breakfast At Tiffany's* tops the charts. The prices given are for the cheapest posters for each film. It is possible, however, to pay thousands for the rarer items

TITLE	DIR. BY	PRICE
1 <i>Breakfast At Tiffany's</i>	Blake Edwards	£150+
2 <i>Goldfinger</i>	Guy Hamilton	£150+
3 <i>Bullitt</i>	Peter Yates	£250+
4 <i>The Great Escape</i>	John Sturges	£250+
5 <i>The Graduate</i>	Mike Nichols	£150+
6 <i>One Flew Over...Cuckoo's Nest</i>	Milos Forman	£75+
7 <i>The Wizard of Oz</i>	Victor Fleming	£500+
8 <i>Casablanca</i>	Michael Curtiz	£2,000+
9 <i>The Godfather</i>	Francis Ford Coppola	£150+
10 <i>Vertigo</i>	Alfred Hitchcock	£150+

Supplied by Vertigo Galleries, 29 Bedfordbury, Covent, London WC1 (0171-836 4179)

SOUNDTRACK ALBUMS

Bernard Herrman, Alfred Hitchcock's musical muse, gets two entries, though at No 1 is his score for Henry Hathaway's 1964 film, which has had to wait 44 years for its soundtrack to be released

TITLE	COMPOSER	LABEL	PRICE
1 <i>Garden of Evil</i>	Bernard Herrman	Marco Polo	(£13.99)
2 <i>The Wicker Man</i>	Paul Giovanni	Trunk	(£13.99)
3 <i>Deadfall</i>	John Barry	Retrograde	(£16.95)
4 <i>Borsellino</i>	Claudio Bolling	Milan	(£9.99)
5 <i>The Comancheros</i>	Elmer Bernstein	Sarabande	(£13.49)
6 <i>Thomas Crown Affair</i>	Michel Legrand	Rhino	(£11.99)
7 <i>Obsession</i>	Bernard Herrman	Unicorn	(£10.99)
8 <i>A Man And A Woman</i>	Francis Lai	Disc AZ	(£15.95)
9 <i>Private Lives...Elizabeth/Essex</i>	Erich Korngold	Sarabande	(£13.49)
10 <i>Adventures of Robin Hood</i>	Erich Korngold	Sarabande	(£13.49)

Supplied by Rare Discs Limited, 18 Bloomsbury Street, London WC1 (0171 580 3516)

WORLD CINEMA VIDEO RENTALS

A double bill by the Dutch director of *Robocop* heads the list of rentals from Blockbuster, while a former member of Big Audio Dynamite - Don Letts has a co-directed effort at No 2. Two more collaborative efforts also make the Top 10.

TITLE	DIR. BY
1 <i>Turkish Delight/Katy's Passion</i>	Paul Verhoeven
2 <i>Dancehall Queen</i>	Rick Elgood/Don Letts
3 <i>Breaking The Waves</i>	Lars Von Trier
4 <i>Ma Vie En Rose</i>	Alain Berliner
5 <i>Man Bites Dog</i>	Belvaux/Bonzel/Poelvoorde
6 <i>All Over Me</i>	Alex Sichel
7 <i>Il Postino</i>	Michael Radford
8 <i>Mon Homme</i>	Bertrand Blier
9 <i>The Secret of Roan Inish</i>	John Sayles
10 <i>Beyond The Clouds</i>	Bertolucci/Wenders

Supplied by Blockbuster Entertainment Limited

Psychedelia revisited

IT'S A CRASS cliché that the southern states of America are stuck in some kind of time warp, but tonight, watching the Olivia Tremor Control, it's as though the last 30 years never happened. Based in Athens, Georgia, home of REM and the state's university, the OTC are presumably studying *Advanced Psychedelia*, majoring in British whimsy 1966-69. So perfect is their take on early Pink Floyd, The Beatles circa Sgt Pepper, and the meandering sleepiness of The Kinks, it almost detracts from the pleasure of such a convincing, fully formed live band.

POP
THE OLIVIA TREMOR CONTROL
THE GARAGE,
HIGHBURY, LONDON

Though centred around a core of five musicians, various auxiliary members wander on stage with instruments ranging from clarinets and trombones to a child's plastic piano. At one point there appear to be 10 people up there, and one of them is simultaneously struggling with a bass guitar and saxophone. Originally from Louisiana, the

OTC are at their best when their perfect harmonies coalesce around deceptively simple songs, such as the gorgeous "Jumping Fences", "Define a Transparent Dream" and "Spring Succeds", all from last year's excellent *Dusk at Cubist Castle* album, and all so concise, they are almost unsatisfying. Other highlights are "Not Human", an acid-fuelled garage band attempting a soul instrumental in an imaginary 1964, complete with primal screaming; and "Holiday Surprise 1, 2, 3", a fine facsimile of the great lost Southern Anglophile outfit Big Star.

With a new album, *Black Pottage*, in the can (another psych-pop extravaganza partly based on fans' dreams) it could be time for this enthusiastic outfit to break through. Both bands will be playing in the UK again within the month. Careful with that trombone, Eugene.

STEVE JELBERT

Majesty of the modernisers

PROMS

BBC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
BBC SINGERS
ALBERT HALL

OLIVER KNUSSON'S Prom could have served as an easy way into 20th-century music, a pity then, that there were so few people in the Albert Hall to benefit from the introduction.

Knusson began with Messiaen's *L'Ascension*, an early (1932-33), four-movement orchestral suite that underlines how swiftly he found his own language, and where it had its roots. The second movement, "Serenade Alleluia of a Soul Which Desires Heaven", is full of pastoral. "Stravinsky-meets-Canteloube" ornamentation; and the rich Ravelian textures of the third are buoyant with the rhythms of dance.

George Benjamin first made his mark at the Proms in 1980, aged 20. After the initial fuss, he seemed to disappear from view to get on with composing the music he wanted to produce.

"Sometime Voices", a 1996 work for baritone, chorus and orchestra, setting a short passage from "The Tempest", shows what a strong voice he himself has acquired. Here was a work with an absolutely secure harmonic basis and scoring that was genuinely inventive.

"Sometime Voices" begins over the whirring of three xylophones struck with side-drum sticks - an extraordinary noise - as the chorus call up Caliban (sung here by the indispensable David Wilson-Johnson). The orchestra gradually trips into life, and again the chorus calls Caliban. The music rises to an extended climax, and the baritone sings his last declamatory lines, the voice veiled as if he were slipping back into sleep.

Holloway is careful to vary his textures - Fuller's "Sound" and "Taste", for example, he treats as bright interludes within his larger structures, the trumpets evoked in his music reflecting the heraldic images in Fuller's often witty poems.

The bur...

THE BOOKS INTERVIEW

Salvation on the screen

What does a career novelist do when writer's block strikes? Zoë Fairbairns talks to Kate Figes

Zoë Fairbairns was understandably nervous at her first interview for seven years. Her voice shook as I struggled to hear what she was saying over the din of Muzak and café chatter. After a string of successful novels, she discovered the doldrums of every professional author's dread - writer's block. She would sit down to write each day, but produced nothing that she felt remotely happy with at the end of it.

As the months of creative barrenness turned into years, her anxiety level rose; she suffered agonising stomach cramps, and the money began to run out. She had to commit the ultimate shameful act for any writer: handing back money to a publisher because she could not complete the contract. "After two years of this," she explains, "I decided that there was no point in being this miserable. I made a list of my saleable skills, which was very short, and began looking for a job."

It is easy to think of the professional writer's life as heavenly when most of the rest of us have no choice but to struggle with the 9 to 5. Two or three hours of scribbling at home before a long lunch and then, of course, there are all of those six-figure advances paid by publishers that we keep reading about in the newspapers.

But the life of the writer can be nerve-racking, lonely and financially precarious. A small number of very successful authors do make a great deal of money, but most of the rest live a life of creative highs and lows where they are at the whims of the market and publishers' marketing departments. It is a fickle business and the fall from fashion can be fast and hard.

Advances are usually low, based on crude, conservative calculations of how many copies the publisher thinks it can sell. Writers need to produce books regularly in order to build up a readership, a profile and an income. If a writer enjoys early success, as Zoë Fairbairns did with her futuristic parable and third novel *Benefits* - one of the landmarks of Seventies feminist literature - then the pressure to produce even better books is immense. It's not enough to produce one good book; there have to be more, ever more original and eye-catching.

"I had produced several novels on a rush of energy and assumed that I would always produce another," Zoë Fairbairns says. "But I grew tired intellectually. Because writing was my living and my sense of self, I had this feeling that I always had to be productive, a source of great anxiety which made the block worse. I had assumed that I would be a writer for ever and that I would always be financially comfortable, but when this happens you have to completely rethink your presumptions."

She never expected to earn a great deal from her books: "a book earns its keep, if it pays a notional salary for the time it takes to write it." But with few other distractions (such as children) and no previous career (her first novel was published by Macmillan when she was only 19), the prospect of not being able to write anything worth publishing was bleak indeed.

"I felt quite lost. I didn't know what I was supposed to be doing. I had heard that there were therapists at the Writers' Guild but I couldn't bring myself to ring. Writing can be a very depressing, draining business. It's a strange thing to do, sit on your own and make up stories, and you need to get away from it from time to time."

Then Zoë Fairbairns saw an advert from the BBC for trainee subtitlers. Now she works three days a week for the Independent Television Facilities Centre in West London, subtitling programmes for deaf viewers. Most budding writers long for the day when they can give up their day job, but she just felt a huge wave of relief. "It got me out and there's a different rhythm to life. It's normal, with commuting, office politics, pension schemes. It suddenly felt as if I were rejoining normal life."

Working in the real world helped trigger the creative juices again. "Working with someone else's plot and dialogue got me back into writing again. It was like swimming with water wings. I still had to kick my legs but it took the pressure off. I needed to live life in order to write about it."



ZOË FAIRBAIRNS, A BIOGRAPHY

ZOË FAIRBAIRNS was born in 1948 in Tunbridge Wells, grew up in Middlesex and studied history at St Andrews. Her first novel, *Live as Family*, appeared in 1969 and was swiftly followed by *Down*. Her third novel was rejected with the words "there is a book to be written about the women's movement but this isn't funny enough". She joined a

writers' group and together they published *Tales I Told My Mother* (Virago, 1978). Her third novel *Benefits* (1979) has been reissued by Five Leaves Publications and was made into a play for the Albany Empire. Her family saga *Stand We At Last* was published in 1983. Her *Today* in 1984, *Closing* in 1987 and *Daddy's Girls* in 1991.

Corrigan have also worked as subtitlers. Zoë Fairbairns' career seems to have coincided neatly with the rise and fall of feminism. *Benefits* captured much of the vigour and political bite of the Seventies with its brilliant, disturbing portrait of a future where women are paid to stay at home and have babies. By taking the economic dependency caused by motherhood to its logical conclusion, she produced a powerful examination of gender politics. She put women's politics at the heart of a family saga in *Stand We At Last* and played with other literary forms too, setting a mystery among temples in *Here Today*. Then, in the early Nineties, the block set in, as it did with much of feminism.

Her new novel *Other Names* (Michael Joseph, £9.99) is set in 1989 and revolves around two women, one middle-aged and

herself straight into the middle of the backlash against feminism. For women, it seems, have made no more progress. A former feminist giant returns to the age-old romantic formula in which intelligent women lose every brain cell when it comes to a good-looking guy. Fairbairns laments the loss of Seventies feminism, when women focused on an agreed programme of demands: equal pay, equal opportunities, child care. "Feminism has come to mean whatever the person talking wants it to mean. In one way that is very democratic; but it's not conducive to effective campaigning."

Wisely, Zoë Fairbairns has no plans to give up her day job, for the literary Dynard of television subtitling has not yet been completely effective. "I have learnt that there is no law that says that just because you produce one book, you have to produce one every year after that. People don't forget you." But the sad truth is that people do. There's a new generation of readers who could not read when *Benefits* was first published. Will *Other Names* excite their palates? Older women who remember loving *Stand We At Last* have moved on to other things - general fiction rather than novels that centre around women's politics. So all you budding writers out there, take care. One or two hits on the crest of a marketing wave does not a career make.

But there's a deep cynicism to the plot, which inevitably reflects Fairbairns' own disheartened view of feminism. All these two women from different backgrounds do is get hoodwinked by an unreconstructed schmuck. Unwittingly, she has plunked

middle-class, the other a daughter of a single mother and active Seventies feminist. Both are in love with the same man, a City shark who persuades the older woman to become a Lloyd's "name" just before the great hurricane sent shivers through the insurance industry.

"I was working on a half-hour programme about Lloyd's. When you subtitle you play the programme over and over again to catch every word and then you edit it down. I became intensely interested in this woman who had lost all her money. I really knew how she felt."

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COVER STORIES



AN UNLIKELY diarist is yet to have his say on the last term of Conservative government. Gyles Brandreth, the former Member for Chester, is currently trawling through his back pages for Weidenfeld & Nicolson, publisher of the outrageously successful, *Alan Clark Diaries*. Always something of a laughing stock - though, as time wore on, no more so than many of his Rt Hon colleagues - Brandreth is apparently, a witty observant chronicler of his five years at Westminster, which ended in the Whips Office. These days, he earns his living as a novelist (*Venice Midnight*, his second offering, is imminent) and publisher of children's books at André Deutsch, where his claim to fame is a recent signing of a book about the adventures of the porcine Tamworth Two.

WITH THE first anniversary of the death of Diana, Princess of Wales almost upon us, the books chronicling her life and work continue to proliferate. Most are of questionable taste. Take, for example, the forthcoming offering from Michael O'Mara, the eponymous publisher whose untimely 1980s tributes to the Queen Mother and to the happy union of Charles and Diana gave way to Andrew Morton (whose latest update to *Diana: Her True Story* is newly available). *Diana: The Secret Years*, published in early November, is by the hitherto unknown Simone Simmons. According to O'Mara, she was "the late Princess's best friend and confidante during the last years of her life" and taught Di how to disguise herself so as to pop to the shops unrecognised and travel incognito to tourist class. Other than that, O'Mara is keeping his lips firmly sealed around one of his favourite cigars. But Judith Curr of the US publishers Ballantine, who bought American rights against stiff competition, assures us that "it's the first really new thing on Diana since her death".

AS GRADUATES return from their hols and begin the gruesome task of eysing a living, those considering a job in publishing may pause to read a recent industry survey. British publishers still produce 100,000 titles a year - but with fewer people. Key Note's 1998 *Market Review: UK Publishing* says many books "no longer receive the high-quality editorial treatment that they once did" as pressure increases and staff put quantity above quality. The picture is one of "a shrinking industry", according to analysis in *The Bookseller*. This supposedly liberal, enlightened industry employs a mere 2.7 per cent of people from ethnic minorities, against a national average of 4.4 per cent. Disabled workers are only 0.22 per cent (4.67 per cent elsewhere). And the overall balance is now shifting in favour of men. In other words, only healthy, Caucasian males need apply.

THE LITERATOR

The burden in the boot

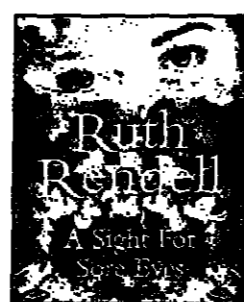
Frances Fyfield argues that the mistress of suspense is marking time

RUTH RENDELL has a penchant for hopelessness, reminiscent of Ailta Brookner. They both write about fixed lives unable to step outside the tangent on which they find themselves trapped; people incapable of turning back the clock set ticking by childhood influences, and therefore prisoners of their circumstances. If the clock should strike, and remind them of the possibility of a great bound for freedom, they are in the kitchen, washing a mug and suddenly beyond hearing distance of the chime.

At best, such characters stimulate the compassion that is essential to suspense; or - as they drag others down - they infuriate, in an equally useful way from the novelist's point of view; or they form part of the plot where others will live beyond them; or they simply have a fascinating life of their own. Brookner does that, creating bleak landscapes full of tears and fury. Rendell and her alter ego Barbara Vine have certainly done it, *par excellence*.

But not in this written-on-the-wing book. Despite its excellent later plot, the neat construction and the powerful images, it remains a wandering narrative about universally dislikeable people, clinically described and dissected and then manipulated into playing a long, slow game.

Ted Drex is a late and absurdly handsome child of trashy parents stuck in a Sixties time-war. They live with Ted's uncle in a loveless, semi-detached London environment, with peeling paint and the



A Sight for Sore Eyes
by Ruth Rendell
Hutchinson, £16.99, 320pp

constant fume and stain of cigarettes and beer, laced by the cheap wool of Ma's vile-coloured crocheting. No culture, no radio, no will to connect or improve, or even notice the uncle's huge vintage car outside. Ted's only improving influence is the cabinet maker next door who cares for him and introduces him to standards of beauty and taste that become his obsession.

The parents die; the drunken plumber uncle wants Ted out. There is the boot of the Edsel car, and by the time Francine, vision of slender loveliness, comes on the scene, Ted is a potentially homicidal loner who can only get worse. (The intervention

of school and life outside is forgotten.) Francine, on the other hand, has a great fear of going dumb in the same way as she did when she overheard her mother's murder at the age of seven.

Everyone gets madder. Ted's total preoccupation with interior design becomes evident. He finds the perfect house in which to keep his gorgeous Francine, but this means persuading the hideous owner to vacate. His obsessive eye fails to detect the fact that there are two owners but, by now, he and reality have parted. The only suspense is whether lonely Francine will survive an attempt to jump from dreadful trying-pan into crueler fire, and how Ted will dispose of the burden in the boot.

All of this would work if there were the morality of Inspector Wexford guiding it; some superstructure taking the narrative beyond these one-dimensional, stricken lives. Which is not to suggest that Rendell needs the prop of conventional heroes; she doesn't. She has written some of the best novels of 20th-century fiction, not confined to the crime genre, and she will do so again. But this compulsive writer can occasionally produce the second-rate. Rendell/Vine is a class act, but she has a depressive understudy who gets a part infrequently enough to avoid serious damage to reputation. Inevitably, perhaps, but this is still not the evening to buy your first ticket to her play. Read *The Keys to the Street* or *King Solomon's Carpet* instead.

Through a glass, darkly

Jane Jakeman savours a vintage performance from a maestro of murder

MICHAEL DIBDIN went off form in his last crime novel, *Cost for Tulle*. Its interminable Mozartian intrigue condemned the writer to a *tour de force* of plotting that bogged the book down, even as a parody of the detective-story narrative. He writes with such easy skill that he must get quickly bored, and tempted to show off the sleight of hand that can whisk his settings from one side of the world to the other, his characters from seedy Oxford language teachers to Neapolitan crooks.

Dibdin also sets himself an extraordinary variety of challenges: killings inside an obscure American cult, in the secret world of the Vatican, among the Mafia. His latest book is a distinguished contribution to wine-buff crime, a genre that probably started when the Duke of Clarence was tipped into the butt of Malmsey, and was given a gruesome edge by Edgar Allan Poe in his story *The Cask of Amontillado*.

A Long Finish does have the mandatory body in a barrel, but, more important, it returns to all the virtues that make Dibdin the best writer of crime fiction never to have won the Booker. Inspector Aiurello Zen is dispatched north to investigate the hideous death of a Piedmont wine producer, whose son has been charged with the murder. Zen's brief is to get the suspect out of jail so that the current harvest will not be endangered, and so that a fabulously wealthy connoisseur in Rome can



A Long Finish
by Michael Dibdin
Faber & Faber, £16.99, 256pp

add that year's vintage to the dusty wine racks in his cellar.

In the process, Zen encounters the provincial community of Alba, with an array of extraordinary but believable characters. Here are all the small-town kindness and nastiness, the physicality of landscape, the clouds of clay and oozing mists, the casual petty brutality that conspire to make the reader's flesh creep.

Dibdin is a master of the lean narrative, the elliptical and scalp-tingling implication of something just beyond the edge of vision. There's a scene where he carries off one of the most difficult tricks of all: letting the

reader watch the unknowing detective sitting side by side with the killer, so that every nerve screams "behind you!" and the nerve-turning factor is irresistible.

Zen himself emerges as a deeper character. Here he's the centre of a subplot about his long-lost daughter and the social consequences of DNA testing, which is a finely balanced bit of tragic-comedy. And for those who are charmed by the outward magic of Tuscany, here's a reminder of the nasty side of rural life, including a spine-chilling peasant cottage with pet rats running around.

Jancis Robinson was Dibdin's advisor on viticulture, so he is convincingly deep into the intricacies of the trade, including the modern seams of buying generic wine and selling it as *origine controllata*, as well as atmospheric accounts of traditional cobwebby cellars and bottling operations. He has nosed into truffle-hunting as well - ounce for ounce, white truffles make uncut diamonds look cheap - dropping in all sorts of lore about the training of the hounds, as well as bits of peasant wisdom on food. (Eating lentils makes you rich; every one you eat will come back some day as a gold coin.)

The murders are motivated by Shakespearean passions, but they are believable in this stark landscape. Dibdin's writing has the earthy flavour of a murderous world - "le goût du terroir", as wine-buffs say - in spades.

Voyages to the interior

Now that remote places are overrun with trippers, writers take internal trips. By Adam Hopkins

Except for travelling, nothing is more agreeable than settling down to a stack of travel books, with a promise of action, reflection, entertainment, understanding: a world, or a decent chunk of it, in waiting. Except that what is on display in these new works is not so much the world as a set of urgent, restless, unsettled egos, all in search of something not easily stated, often right there within the self.

Here's Jonny Bealby, for example. In *For a Pagan Song* he tells a new action story about a daring journey on foot, over mountain passes and through war-torn territory, into a remote corner of Afghanistan and thence to Pakistan, to consort with a non-Islamic tribe which starts its oral history with the arrival of Alexander the Great.

All this arresting performance, it turns out, is really a test of authorial manhood. Bealby proves he can face altitude and danger: armed men with "lanceous" scarred faces and endless meals of goat meat (which he hates), describe it all in vivacious, readable style - and get it published. That, as the book progressively reveals, is the deepest of his many motivations in making the journey.

And it is a fascinating matter. For here is a young man aged 21, proud never to have read a book. His girlfriend gives him one, a little nervously. He reads it, with her help, has never since been without a book in hand, and sets off with her to Kashmir. She dies there, in a manner unexplained in *For a Pagan Song*. Grief-stricken, he sets off round Africa on a motorbike and writes a praised volume, *Turning with the Moon*.

Can he now do it again, he asks himself and us? Yes he has, with great enthusiasm and a naïf charm. Well done, you find yourself saying in almost parental tones. But, frankly, why should we bother? Why are we lumbered with the responsibility for Bealby working himself out?

There is a theory that the inner search, the quest, as a main theme in recent travel-writing springs from the fact that so many books about place have been written that travel writers in search of a market have had to move inward. There may possibly be some truth in this. But it cannot be the whole truth, for the inner quest through physical displacement has been with us just about for ever, from Galahad and the grail to Gurdjieff and his meetings with remarkable men.

What is new today is the very personal and often everyday nature of the search, even in the most exotic places. The writer wrestles not with the deepest destiny of mankind but with items that may seem, as in Bealby's case, of largely private concern.

The issue comes even more sharply into focus with *Faithful Travellers* by the North American golfer James Dodson. He recently hugged his terminally ill father round a good many courses, producing a volume called (wait for it) *Final Rounds*, a prizewinner beloved among American golfers. In this new book, as Dodson's marriage collapses he takes his seven-year-old daughter on a trip from New England to the West. They enjoy six weeks and 8,000 miles of fishing and camping in what appears an increasingly banal "wild" West. He tells the tale with homely homilies, literary references (inspired by Hemingway as Bealby is by Kipling) and with sweetly sentimental family - or, in this case, non-family - jokes, all in a skilful, *Reader's Digest* manner.

In reply to the little girl's enquiries, he has to face the Big Questions. How much raspberries are in good for you? Does God exist? They explore the nature of miracles, her sorrow and anger at the divorce, the existence of the tooth fairy, and so on - including the reasons for, and the



Masai warriors celebrate the initiation of boys into manhood in the Marok district in Kenya

Reuters

responses to, his own private misery as a rejected husband.

I read it swiftly with mingled interest in the relationship and the dab-handed technique. But what, you may well ask, is the inner purpose? Is Dodson really travelling for the sake of his daughter and himself, or is the intention more purely literary and commercial? Certainly, there seems to have been authorial commitment from the start. To write a book like this, you have to keep notes, as Dodson clearly has. He can tell us the content of daily radio news programmes (and does, unfortunately). He writes a letter to his daughter, supposedly on a paper bag. But, hey presto, he gives us the whole text, so presumably he has made a copy.

At one level, the journey, and the relationship, are simply raw material. If I were Maggie Dodson, Muggins to the author, I might one day protest at the way my childhood had been used. Which is partly (alas for human nature) our interest in reading it. For here is a relationship betrayed in advance and then paraded in public. It may be a kind of therapy, but surely the most exploitative kind.

Where does private end and public begin? Some of the best of Jonny Bealby's book describes, with a punishing frankness, his difficulties with his travelling companion. I should not care to read it if I were that companion. Even more personal, in terms of taking somebody else's life apart, is Mary Anne Fitzgerald's considerably longer and denser, though highly readable book *My Warrior Son*.

Essentially, it recounts the informal adoption - by this Kenya-based, trouble-chasing journalist, already a single mother - of a young Masai boy called Peter. She is expelled from Kenya, but some years later Peter, now



My Warrior Son
by Mary Anne Fitzgerald
Michael Joseph, £16.99, 288pp



Faithful Travellers
by James Dodson
Century, £12.99, 304pp



For a Pagan Song
by Jonny Bealby
Heinemann, £16.99, 246pp



The Happy Ant-Heap
by Norman Lewis
Cape, £14.99, 288pp

in his early twenties, comes on an extended visit to England. This is followed by more encounters and journeys together in Africa, with accounts of life in African villages: a subject about which I, at least, can read indefinitely. Fitzgerald portrays a young man of uncertain identity damaged by lack of early love, a good deal

less than frank (he turns out not to be the orphan he was supposed to be) and of no more than occasional charm.

While he both compels and often repels the love that Fitzgerald offers, he is generally maddening in his dependency. Above all there is his willingness, along with that of other Africans whom she rashly thinks to be her

friends, to treat her as a cash cow, as a "mobile bank". Not Peter, but at least one of the others, gives up on her when she runs out of cash.

My Warrior Son appears to be an honest, fighting book, the author's attempt to understand herself as well as the Africa of which she feels an inseparable part. In many of her anecdotes she emerges in just as poor a light as Peter. At the same time, the book illustrates in clearest terms two standard aspects of the new genre of "travelling relationships". Fitzgerald has taken command of Peter's image, at so intimate a level that the relationship often feels betrayed; and we spend a great deal of our reading time involved in the inner workings of her ego.

It is all extremely interesting, but what a relief to turn to that old master Norman Lewis, even if *The Happy Ant-Heap* - a collection of recent and fairly recent pieces, some published for the first time - is not exactly a heavyweight. Here is a man who is not involved in any argument about himself or his identity. The "I" is a lever for anecdote, a guarantee that his are the observing eyes; part of the classic act, balanced and humane, bringing us good reason for indignation or pleasure, laughter or simply astonishment.

He tackles subjects from India to Melanesia, by way of Europe, Africa and Central America - indeed, just about anywhere you can think of. Sometimes he is filling in the gaps left by his earlier books, sometimes he seems to be reflecting on a lifetime's travelling, starting off with the Second World War. It's wonderful stuff, a guaranteed good read; you feel secure with Norman Lewis, mainly because he is so old-fashioned. His subject is the world out there.

INSPIRATIONS

NOVELIST ANDRÉ BRINK



The place
A deep and desolate valley known as "The Hell", lost in the forbidding "Swartberg" (Black Mountain) range between the Great and Little Karoo in South Africa. Well over a century ago a few

intrepid pioneers settled there and developed a ferocious, closely-knit, patriarchal community which remained isolated from the outside world until a road was built into the valley a few decades ago. Now its magic has been spoilt, and most inhabitants have left. But from the moment I first set eyes on its austere beauty I just knew it was a setting for a novel; and the marvellous stories I was told by the last diehards, freely mixing reality and invention, the natural and the supernatural, all went into the making of my latest novel, *Devil's Valley*.

The play
I think I'll stick with Chekhov: the inimitable sadness suffused with mirth in *The Seagull*. Chekhov certainly wrote greater plays, but the emblematic figure of Nina, Treplev's delusions of grandeur, the bleakness of Trigorin's inner wasteland, glossed over by cynicism; the richness and subtlety of these figures remain to me a consummation devoutly to be wished.

The film
Burnt by the Sun, directed by Nikita Mikhalkov - that Russian sense of the earth, of the seasons, the way in which a large world of politics invades the most private and personal of lives - all of this confirmed for me so much of what I've lived through under apartheid and tried to write about; and the way in which the film transcends the here-

and-now to expand our sense of what we mean when we talk about "the human" still leaves me breathless. The cameo of the father caressing his little daughter's foot while the machinations of betrayal and terror are building up around them is sublime.

The artwork
Any of Vermeer's tranquil interiors infused with the unutterable silence of human lives. Or Picasso's *Guernica*, which still sends shivers down my spine (which is where Nabokov located the organ with which we recognise art). That timeless shout against what violence does to the vulnerable and the weak and the beautiful.

The music
I always come back to Mozart or Beethoven. I cannot work without music. Whenever I'm really stuck, just staring at a blank screen, the only sure remedy is the Finale of the *Eroica*. Simply because it is so exultant, so unrestrained in its celebration. Once I've got that going, the block starts to give way; and soon I'll be typing to the furious rhythms of the music. And when it's over, when I need to give myself over to something soothing and larger than any here-and-now, it's the *Adagio* from the Ninth; or any of Mozart's Flute Sonatas. Which slowly, soothingly, allows new thoughts and scenes to germinate.

'Devil's Valley' is published by Secker & Warburg at £15.99

ERRATA

By Felix Bennett



Rask was once thought to be the most evil book ever written, until the publication of *The Roy Strong Diaries*.

When the past is another country

HERE WE GO again. The literary autumn will witness a fierce battle for sales and readers between the heaviest guns of American and British fiction. In the Redcoats' ranks, new works from the likes of Pat Barker, Julian Barnes, Ian McEwan, Sebastian Faulks and (whether he likes his uniform or not) Martin Amis stand poised and ready to charge. The US invaders number Tom Wolfe, Philip Roth, Jane Smiley, Gore Vidal and Robert Stone in their vanguard. And, already, the vociferous Fifth Column on these shores is urging an unconditional surrender.

In last weekend's *Sunday Times*, Jason Cowley rehearsed the familiar English kowtow to the superior fire-power of the Yanks. American novels are excitingly "in thrall to the present", runs this old song; the Brits bang on about their fading past. The Americans embrace modernity and hope; Brits sink back into all that stale stuff about world wars, slavery and Empire. And so, predictably, on. Erroneously, too. Turn to recent major US fiction, and do you find an echo of the Henry Ford opinion on past events? Hardly. Charles Frazier's superselling *Cold Mountain*? An 1860s tale of the rigours of war. Russell Banks's *Cloudsplitter*? The prelude to the Civil War, this time, and the godly terrorism of abolitionist John Brown. Don De Lillo's *Underworld*? The Cold War history of his nation, no less, with a special focus on the Fifties. And in

A WEEK IN BOOKS



BOYD TONKIN

History is bunk, said Henry Ford. Richard Ford would disagree

Paradise, Toni Morrison closed the loose historical trilogy that began, under slavery, with *Beloved*. Now for those autumn heavyweights. In *Married A Communist*, Philip Roth

revisits the McCarthy witch-hunts of the early Fifties; Jane Smiley explores the social outcomes of the Civil War in *The All-True Travels and Adventures of Lidie Newton*; and Gore Vidal sashays around his favourite bits of the 19th century once more in *The Smithsonian Institution*. As for Tom Wolfe's mouthwatering epic of the brash New South, *A Man in Full* - well, if anyone imagines that Wolfe's pulsating tableaux of the forces that shape our time do not count as contemporary social history, then I'm Edmund Wilson.

Great American fiction treats its communal past (which, in that country, encompasses the planet's memory) with the same rich mix of fret and joy, intrigue and outrage, as English, German, Indian or Brazilian writing. Rupert Murdoch, who owns the *Sunday Times*, may wish to abolish the past

that gives people reasons to resist him; US writers never do. Look at Richard Ford's splendid new *Grant's Book of the American Long Story* (Granta, £12.99). In this anthology, history shadows the present at every turn.

Ever the courtly Southerner, Ford as editor declines to slip any of his own fine efforts into his mixed bag of 11 middle-distance fictions since 1945. More self-effacement comes in a po-faced preface that takes 30 pages to show that critics have failed to define the novella as anything more exact than "a story of intermediate length". Er, yes. Then the fun starts, with a spikily graceful slice of tradition-driven Southern life by Ford's mentor Eudora Welty. He allows himself a Confederate tilt throughout, with cold Northerners of the Bellow and Updike stamp nowhere to be seen. City-dwellers do poorly, too: the

road does end in the Brooklyn of Edwidge's Danticat's 1995 story *Carolanne's Wedding*, but among Haitian immigrants.

His Dixie slant aside, Ford's choices span vast tracts of space and time, deep gulfs of race and class. The quality hardly ever dips. Our editor opts firmly for realism over the avant garde, and for those moments when the past and future meet.

Philip Roth's New Jersey rite-of-passage *Goodbye, Columbus* is here; along with the cross-racial passion (set in 1911) of Joyce Carol Oates's *I Look My Door Upon Myself*; the delicate suburban angst of Jane Smiley's *The Age of Grief*; the elusive, Thirties Memphis demi-monde of Peter Taylor's *The Old Forest*; the slow heartbreak of pre-Civil Rights black family life in Ernest J Gaines's *A Long Day in November*; and (for me, the

highlight in a brilliant field) the terrifying descent of Europe's ghosts on Miami retirees in Cynthia Ozick's *Rosa*. According to the Cowley line, Ozick's career-long preoccupation with the enduring presence of the past (the Holocaust, to be precise) should brand her as a gutless, backward-looking Brit. I would love to hear this Bronx freerack of a writer answer him.

History-haunted, family-bound, more soulful than purely cerebral, Ford's America does look less urban, cool and smart than some versions. Yet, just when you imagine that this volume will reach the syllabus of every genteel college, he plays a wild card. *The Making of Ashenden* by Stanley Elkin is a savage hippie-era provocation that begins with a grotesque satire on the super-rich and then segues into an alarming beast-fable that crosses not



Tom Wolfe

the cultural, but the species divide - like Ovid rescripted by William Burroughs. This piece alone should keep Ford's engrossing tome off reading lists across the Bible Belt. American writers even Dixie gents - do like to keep a joker up their sleeve.

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More than half a century after Hemingway, Laura Thompson revisits the literary bullring and asks: Where's the beef?

In the corridas of power



Matadors: a journey into the heart of modern bullfighting
by Eamonn O'Neill
Mainstream, £15.99, 224pp

Like boxing and Venice, bullfighting is a subject that lures a writer with its siren promise; but it is a promise that can deceive. Subjects like these, so majestically wrapped in their atmospheric cloak, can leave the writer floundering in its folds. "I found the greatest difficulty," wrote Ernest Hemingway in *Death in the Afternoon*, "aside from knowing truly what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel, was to put down what really happened in action; what the actual things were which produced the emotion that you experienced."

Hemingway cut through the folds of atmosphere and brought his subject before us, sharp as the shadow of the matador in a sun-baked Seville redondel. However, 66 years later, the cult of Hemingway has wrapped its own obfuscatory cloak around bullfighting.

In writing *Matadors*, Eamonn O'Neill has a double layer of mystification to contend with. He is entering the ring with a subject that flourishes not one, but two capotes de brega, or fighting capes. As any young bull would be in that situation, O'Neill is up against it.

How does he cope? By ensuring that his book is nothing like *Death in the Afternoon*; not, of course, that he ignores that definitive account. Indeed, he gives one chapter of *Matador* to an encounter with the president of the Hemingway Association, Allen Josephs, who offers the most interesting thoughts in the book.



A bullfighter bites the horn of a vanquished bull at the end of a fight near Madrid

At one point, Josephs says that "The corrida itself is not a competition between the man and the animal," a statement that deserves, but does not get, close examination. If bullfighting is not that, then what is it? Josephs also says, of Hemingway, that "he had to get to the point where he understood

bullfighting well enough, and that takes years."

This is a dangerous thought for O'Neill to quote in his book. Because the reader does not feel that he understands bullfighting; or, indeed, that he even wants to give the impression of understanding it. He is no descendant of Hemingway. His

book is in a newer tradition: that of the journalistic article, stretched out to about 80,000 words beyond its natural length because a successful magazine writer has had an idea that a publisher thinks will sell.

Matadors bears all the hallmarks of the book that isn't really a book. Although fascinated by bullfight-

ing, O'Neill seems to have no "felt" relationship with the subject. He is omnipresent in his own narrative, cluttering up the text with phrases such as "I scribbled down his reply in my notebook". Yet the reader senses an authorial absence at the heart of the book.

The complexities of its subject are

eluded. Thus "I felt pleased for the boy [a novillero who has just made his first kill] but, in a way, sorry for the bull. I consoled myself with the thought that it had been a brave enough bull and that, in some ways, made me feel better."

As the subtitle says, this is a "modern account", so presumably a

moral commitment would be rather *de trop*. *Matadors* is rootless in every sense. Its structure derives from a "journey" through Spain that ends at the bull run in Pamplona, the best part of the book.

Here, O'Neill conveys just that desperate quest for authenticity which obsesses our lost souls and leads us to erode the very thing we seek. He understands this very well. The Pamplona passage would have made a terrific article.

But a book requires more than a journalist's understanding of his own standpoint. What, beyond that, is *Matadors* about? Is it about how bullfighting, too, is threatened by the modern world? O'Neill refers, for example, to the Americanisation of Spain, to uncomprehending tourists and to a bullfighter named Jesulin de Ubrique, who has been marketed for "the kids... who were more interested in watching a Quentin Tarantino film".

66 years after 'Death in the Afternoon', the cult of Hemingway has wrapped its own obfuscatory cloak around bullfighting

Interesting though this is, it is insufficient. What the reader wants is for O'Neill to get to the heart of his subject; to ask why, in the "modern" world, Spaniards are still compelled to watch bullfighting. And why is he, the author, compelled? He may think that he tells us, but he doesn't really. His accounts of corridas - of the bull running "like a puppy chasing after a ball", or the bull that "wet itself and looked pathetic" - leave a feeling of revulsion that *Death in the Afternoon* does not.

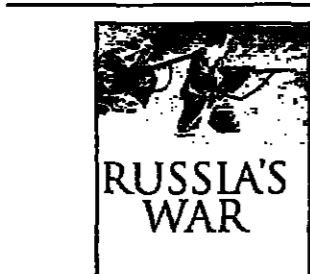
Hemingway's honesty was such that it cleansed the reader of disgust. His morality, as someone who enjoyed watching bullfights, might be open to question; his morality as someone who wrote about them, never. With O'Neill, whose reason for writing *Matadors* remains unclear, the reader is not so sure.

How the Red Army saved us all

Robert Service acclaims a broad picture of heroism and heartbreak on the Eastern front

THERE IS little that binds Russians together today. They haggle about Lenin. They disagree about the recent burial of the murdered tsar. They are divided about the break-up of the USSR. They don't know whether they like political democracy and the market. Their national self-confidence is at its nadir.

Yet the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War in 1995 found them briefly in unity. Russians took pride in the fact that Hitler would have conquered Europe but for the Red Army's power and valour. In 1941 the German tank units looked as though they would overrun the Soviet Union by Christmas. In 1943, the movement was turning in the opposite direction when Field Marshal Paulus surrendered at Stalingrad and the Wehrmacht was defeated in the battle of Kursk. In 1944 the siege of Leningrad was lifted. In battle after battle the Germans were forced to retreat and in May 1945 the Red Army was the first Allied force to reach Berlin. No doubt existed among the Allies at the time that Russia's war effort had been the prerequisite for the world to survive the Nazi menace. The endur-



Russia's War
by Richard Overy
Allen Lane/Penguin Press, £20, 394pp

ance and self-sacrifice of Soviet citizens in the Red Army and in the rear were not quickly forgotten.

Yet now it is understandably difficult to accept that Stalin, the Saddam Hussein of his day, may have been responsible for our salvation. While confronting Hitler, Stalin was still busily imprisoning and killing his own people; after 1945, he did the same to Eastern Europe. Moreover, Stalin's economic organisation meant that millions of Soviet

citizens had barely enough to eat even in peacetime.

But the internal strengths of the Soviet system were real. Hitler's generals knew that they were up against a competent, well equipped and indefatigable enemy. Indeed, this was among the reasons why Operation Barbarossa was initiated against the USSR in 1941: to have delayed the campaign would have given Stalin the leisure to go on building up an insuperable military capability.

His tale has often been told. In Britain, John Erickson set the standard in works based on Soviet documentary collections and interviews with survivors. He argued that the Red Army was the product of military efficiency and popular commitment, and Richard Overy writes in the same tradition. He is an expert in Nazi history, and not the least of his virtues is an ability to offer measured judgements on the strengths of the Soviet and German fighting machines.

The book relies on translated Russian material and does not refer to several important works in that language. Yet *Russia's War* gives a mastery account of the connection between the pol-

itics of the Kremlin and the rudimentary conditions of life in the USSR.

Overy scrutinises the country as a comprehensive fighting entity. This is at the centre of his explanation of Soviet victory. The USSR had more people and tanks and aircraft than Germany. It also had the advantage of a huge zone into which the Red Army could retreat. But Overy insists that patriotic enthusiasm for the fight was just as important.

Hitler and Stalin are depicted in all their gruesomeness, but Stalin is given a somewhat easier treatment. Yet *Russia's War* succeeds in integrating the latest Western publications in a vivid, coherent account. No one in Russia has tried to do this. There, the war is still a controversy about details. The broad picture has been left for foreigners to paint. Overy has risen to the challenge, and a Russian publisher should snap him up. The 25 million Soviet war dead deserve a proper epitaph in their own country.

Robert Service is professor of Russian history and politics at London University; his *History of Twentieth-Century Russia* is now in Penguin.

INDEPENDENT CHOICE

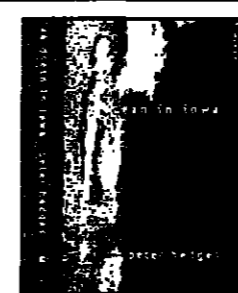
NEW RITES-OF-PASSAGE NOVELS, BY JUDY COOKE

Novels about growing up can be as painful to read as the experience itself, but Judith Bryan keeps a sense of direction as she explores a family history in *Bernard and the Cloth Monkey* (Flamingo, £9.99). Two sisters meet in "the 'ole homestead" - the suburban house where they grew up with an abusive father and a weak mother. As always, they quarrel about their parents; now that their father is dead and the "cloth monkey" has gone on the first holiday of her life, they wander through the quiet rooms, coming to terms with their childhood.

Anita, who suffered most, is bitterly critical of her parents. She is recovering from a breakdown in which her imagined companion and fellow sufferer, Greta, has been sent packing. Beth, escaped this degree of confusion; always more sympathetic to her mother and protected by her, she is full of guilt towards her sister. Her own price for survival has been the sacrifice of a wanted baby. Chicken George, her hopeless boyfriend, was sent to jail at a crucial time. The cloth monkey insisted on an abortion and, in return, covered up the facts. Bernard was never told.

This powerful material, remembered in flashbacks and dreams, is slowly revealed in the context of a hot London summer. Anita is much exercised by issues of race: her white boyfriend, Steve Stein, would certainly have displeased Daddy. There is a sense of life moving forward again as she plans to return to college, able at last to sleep easy at home. Winner of last year's Saga Prize for new black novelists, this is an impressive debut.

Kate Bingham, an award-winning poet, has



Pick of the Week: An Ocean in Iowa
by Peter Hedges
Flamingo, £9.99, 248pp

also chosen to examine a less than perfect family in her first novel, *Mummy's Legs* (Virago, £9.99). Sarah is 10, the only child of an overpopulated marriage; both her parents have affairs but her mother, Catherine, is beginning to buckle under the strain. David, Catherine's lover, proves unfaithful, too, and this triggers a suicide bid. A kind voice on the phone tells Sarah to be Mummy's legs and go and open the front door and let the ambulance men in.

Moving back and forward in time, the novel compares the events of two childhoods, Sarah's and Catherine's, and gives an indication that much can be salvaged from this wreck. An unexpected denouement challenges that assumption. Although the writing is precise and original, the continual changes of tone ultimately flatten the impact.

Canadian writing continues to flourish with newcomers such as André Alexis, who was born in Trinidad and grew up in a small town near Ottawa. The setting for his first novel *Childhood* (Bloomsbury, £14.99) is immediately engaging, as the unsentimental Thomas looks back in his twenties to his early years. Brought up by Ella McMillan, his

volatile Trinidadian grandmother, he meets his mother, Katarina.

When Ella dies, with her is a bearded man with missing teeth, Pierre Matat. He shares a life on the road with mother and son until Matat abandons them. Ottawa is the next stop, with a new surrogate father. The scholarly Henry Wing, a black man with Chinese blood, teaches Thomas to be a scientist. Alexis has an unusual story to tell, with some flamboyant characters. His gentle, ironic voice makes him a delightful companion who turns aside from the "loving relationship with chaos" (which is how he sees his mother) to philosophise and play literary games.

His timetable - soon abandoned, begun as an act of desperation - lists the events of his morning minute by minute. His close friend, Alexander, turns out to be a grey parrot.

An *Ocean in Iowa* (Flamingo, £9.99), Peter Hedges' second novel, is an accomplished follow-up to the much praised *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*. This study of a family breaking up is told with economy and force, from Scotty Ocean's point of view. "Seven is going to be my year," Scotty declares, seeing his birthday cake with a moon-landing decoration.

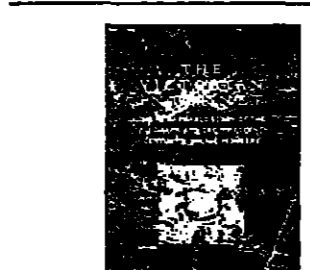
His father, the Judge, knows everything about everything. His mother, Joan, is an artist; even in Iowa in 1961. She finds the courage to rebel, and leaves home. By his eighth birthday, Scotty has learnt more than he needs to about his parents, his sisters, his schoolfriends. He reacts violently - anything to avoid the sadness - and the reader is with him all the way. The dialogue is fresh and natural, the comedy perfectly pitched: a beautiful book.

Urgent. Internet 150 years old. Stop.

Marina Benjamin warns against a back-to-front perspective on the age of the telegraph

A HUNDRED and fifty years before the Internet gave us e-mail, surfers and net-heads, telegraphy gave us boomers, bonus men and sigs - a sassy subcultural jargon devised by online adepts specialising in instant global communications. For those of us who regard the telegraph as an antique, chiefly associated with movies where people read out telegrams and enunciate the word "stop" for dramatic effect, this sign of modernity comes as something of a jolt. It poses the question whether we are as up to date as we like to think.

In language that could have come straight out of *Wired* or *MacUser*, one telegraph enthusiast swooned over "the electric wires which web the world in net-work or throbbing life". The year was 1878, a time when Victorians were routinely plugging in to their own "highway of thought". They reached out to far-dung corners of the globe, using not bytes, but the busy strings of dots and dashes encoded by Samuel Morse.



The Victorian Internet
by Tom Standage
Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £12.99, 216pp

The telegraph, like the Net, shrank the world only to multiply its contents. Nothing was too trivial to report: a flood in Shanghai, hard frosts in Siberia, the price of kangaroo hide in Borneo. As news and gossip thronged the wires, Victorians fretted about information overload. As today, the furious traffic in

information gave rise to concerns about control and disclosure. Cheats and hacks abused the system, businessmen made their fortunes on the back of it, visionaries hailed the network as an instrument for peace, and clandestine romances blossomed online.

Tom Standage's appealing thesis trades on our willingness to thrill to this sort of *déjà vu*. Every aspect of Internet culture finds its uncanny equivalent in the telegraph. The implication is that we are heirs not authors of the communications revolution. This argument strikes me as "Wrong but Wromantic", as 1066 *And All That* might have had it.

As a rule, historical approaches that view the past in terms of precursors ought to be resisted. They elicit the wrong kind of fascination: like applauding monkeys for pouring tea. Fetishising those Clever Victorians is commonplace these days, as we mourn the demise of the amateur inventor. But celebrating their achievements from a

reassuring perspective that insists that we have outdone them does little to uncover the problems they were sited with.

In this back-to-front history, an "Internet" consisting of a system of overhead and underwater cables, supplemented by pneumatic tubes and an army of fleet-footed messenger boys, cannot help but look cumbersome. That said, Standage knows how to spin a good yarn. In recounting the early struggles of men such as Charles Wheatstone, Lord Kelvin and Samuel Morse to get telegraphy recognised as communication and not a conjuring trick, he blends anecdote, suspense and science into richly readable stuff. The fact that for a long time people refused to believe that electric current could encode meaning becomes the core of a quest narrative. And Standage is ever-attentive to the adjustments Victorians were obliged to make as a result of welcoming telegraphy into their lives: they balked, they resisted and, finally, they succumbed.

JP 11/10/150

A Canadian husband-and-wife team have put their distinctive signature on a Somerset garden. By Caroline Donald

True colours shine through

In the garden of the Somerset cottage I've just bought is a strange border planted with varying shades of (unfortunately, clashing) red flowers and leaves that stands at odds with the blowy, romantic and unstructured style of the rest of the space. It seems a peculiar piece of planting, but I know who to blame for it.

Over the hill, at Hadsen Garden, Sandra and Nori Pope have created a stunning garden of "developing monochromes" - where blocks of toning hues merge in a spectrum of colour, from yellow to scarlet to plum to crimson and pastels against a curved brick wall - with such confidence that it is tempting to adopt their style without possessing either their eye or their vast knowledge of plants. Like the thousands of "white gardens" engendered by Vita Sackville-West's original at Sissinghurst, in the coming years, when you spot clumps of nearly corresponding colours next door to each other, you can be sure there will be a copy of the Pope's new *Colour by Design* in the house, probably alongside that other modern style bible, the *River Cafe Coolbook*.

But perhaps the subtitle of the book should be *Don't Try This at Home*. When Nori suggests I meet him at 6.30am, I am not entirely sure whether he is joking. With his wife Sandra away in Ottawa, he is up early, tidying the borders to be ready for Hadsen's opening to the public later that day. "This is not an easy maintenance garden," he says. "We deadhead every day and we don't have weeds because they don't get a chance to seed."

It doesn't mean it has an over-manicured look to it - quite the opposite. One of its charms is its wild exuberance, but the plants have to

be on their best form or they are cut back, hidden or moved.

Rather than working from the outside in - choosing a plant because it has caught your eye, then deciding where to put it - the Pops see their garden as a whole picture and choose (or even breed) the appropriate plant to fit a particular space.

Even the potager is part of the picture. Their attitude towards the garden is ruthless: "Our image of it is complete," says Nori. "When things are outside that image we consider them; if they are in the wrong line or tone or hue, then they have to go. This garden is about what it looks like as a whole."

Although Nori likes gardening for its "peasant" appeal, he and Sandra are hardly horny-handed sons of toil. "Gardening is so physical and yet artistic," he says, "like being a dancer". Their book is filled with allusions to art, philosophy, science, religion - even Dr Seuss.

The predominant metaphor they use, however, is that of music, although neither of them is a musician - "I play the piano very badly," says Nori. "It's a good thing I'm a gardener." Words such as "notes", "composition" and "melody" abound and, in the introduction to the book, while explaining how they can work together without tearing each other's hair out, they write: "People often ask us, in an amazed way, 'How do you possibly garden together?' - yet they never stop to question a couple playing a duet."

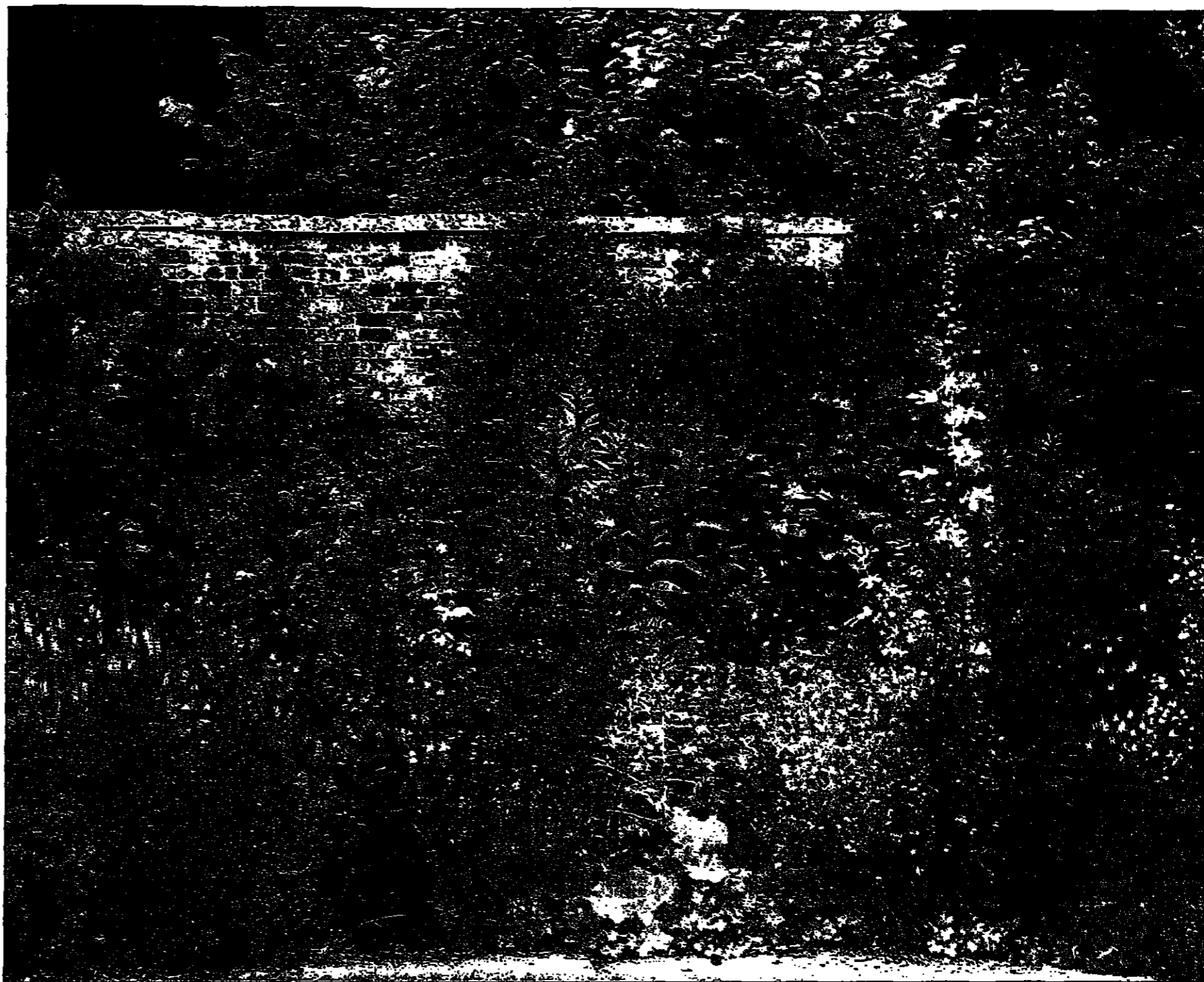
While Sandra is the maestro behind the spectrum border, Nori provides the plants that sing her tune. All this intellectualisation makes the Pops sound rather po-faced but they mix a certain North American earnestness with lightheartedness, and I nearly fell over backwards when Nori said Sandra was away visiting her grandchildren. Fresh air keeps you young; it must be nice to have grandparents who can write a caption to a beautiful photograph by Clive Nichols: "the leviathan *Gunnera manicata* begins to unfurl its giant green body far too early in the year. Like a maladjusted pet, it is wonderful in its cranky behaviour and grand thorny leaves: it cannot bear to hibernate long enough, yet is a martyr to frost."

The Pops first encountered Hadsen in 1986 when they were on sabbatical from their native Canada. Other parts of the grounds had once been gardened by Penelope Hobhouse, but the walled area was a derelict kitchen garden. "People

left their 50p by the door and went round it, if they weren't bitten by the dogs first," says Nori. "We saw it in the late autumn; it looked amazing." They struck a deal with the owner, set up a nursery immediately, cleared the weeds and got stuck into the task of creating the abundance that is there today.

"We began with the colour of the brick wall and planted in relationship to it. If you start with a theme or a melody, you develop it and work it through. We said we would leave when the garden is finished. That's pretty safe."

'Colour by Design' is published on 27 August (Conran Octopus, £25)



Hadsen Garden, Somerset: 'Blocks of toning hues merge in a spectrum of colour, from scarlet to plum to crimson, against a curved brick wall' Clive Nichols

NOW IS the time to plant Madonna lily and *Lilium candidum* bulbs, while they are temporarily dormant.

They should be planted nearer to the surface than most lilies, with only 1in (2.5cm) of soil above the "nose". Plant them away from other lilies in the garden because they carry a virus, which is symptomless for them but not for other species and varieties. I would not be without this lily because for me it represents the traditional cottage garden. Pick plums as soon as they ripen. You may have to go over the tree

WEEKEND WORK



URSULA BUCHAN

several times, as they ripen over a period. Distract the wasps with a jamjar, half-filled with sugar solution, hanging from a branch.

Pinch out or "stop" the growing tips of tomato plants, so that their energy can go into growing and ripening the remaining tomatoes before the nights really start to draw in. On the subject of long nights - they are beginning to get colder - make sure the greenhouse vents are closed before bedtime.

Also, dig up onions and shallots whose tops have died down. Leave them somewhere airy under cover to dry and then store for the winter. Any "bull-necked" ones should be eaten at once, for they will not store well.

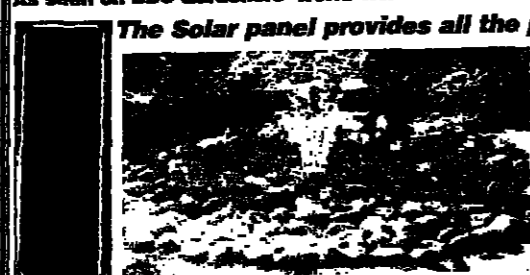
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240 INSD2



The Garden Picture Library

Do the glories of the garden fade too fast? **Ursula Buchan** offers tips for persuading Nature to perform an encore

If you know someone who grows any of the choice varieties, beg some cuttings in spring. They are a doddle to strike then and will flower well the following summer. Alternatively, use the outside fringes of the plant as divisions. I find this keeps them flowering well. It's the least that I can do for plants which give their all through much of the summer.

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A Forestry Commission initiative means it is finally possible to see the birds for the trees



The imaginative approach of the Forestry Commission to managing wildlife has meant that raptors, such as the goshawk, are now flourishing

John E. Swedberg/Ardea

Fifteen years ago, nobody dreamt of managing commercial forests for the benefit of birds. Yet a morning spent in the company of the Forestry Commission's Robin Khan, conservation ranger for the south of England, and Mike Thornley, ranger for the West Midlands forest district, emphasises the enormous advances the Commission has made since the dark days of the Fifties and Sixties, when the aim was to plant every available square metre of ground with conifers and let any wildlife go hang. As we toured a variety of plantations near the Welsh borders, my expert guides demonstrated that birds are now having a strong influence on policy.

It was in the early Eighties that the Commission started making wildlife conservation plans; but these were amateurish, based on random sightings of unusual

specimens. If, for instance, a firestarter with an interest in butterflies reported a rarity, a red sticker would be put on the map, and efforts made to keep that area unchanged. But, as Khan says, "so many people had an input that the maps became minefields for foresters: there were red stickers everywhere, and you couldn't get any work done".

His job in those pioneer days was to go round the districts, check the conservation sites, decide which were important, abolish the rest and start managing the good ones - by, for example, opening up rides that would link one good bird or butterfly area with another. In Dorset, for the benefit of nightjars and wood larks, the Commission began clearing trees from areas that had been heathland to link open stretches of country with nature reserves owned by English Nature, the Dorset Wildlife Trust and other bodies.

In Midland forests (Wyre, near

COUNTRY MATTERS



DUFF HART-DAVIS

Kidderminster, Mortimer, west of Ludlow, and Camock Chase, north of Birmingham) rides were cut and some areas left clear so that the goshawks, for instance, had open spaces in which to hunt. Today, all forest operations, such as thinning, clear-felling and replanting, are

planned with the welfare of the birds in mind. Operational Instruction No 1 lays down that before any major work is done, rangers must check the site to ensure that all environmental considerations have been taken into account.

For much of the morning my talk with Robin and Mike centred on goshawks. The trees most favoured as nest sites by these big raptors are mature conifers, and the birds prefer those with soft needles, such as larch and Douglas fir, through which they can fly without damaging their wings. Sitka spruce is hard and bristly, but may be used if other species are not available.

Nobody yet knows how goshawks choose a nest site; but in hilly terrain, from the knowledge they have gained, foresters can now design new plantations which they believe will have a definite appeal for raptors. Another important factor is the texture of the crop as it grows

to maturity; for nesting purposes, the trees must be far enough apart to give easy passage through the canopy, yet close enough together to produce a feeling of security. Careful thinning is essential.

As we moved from one site to another, Khan kept assessing the trees by his own proven method: "If you have to move your head from side to side before you can see the nest, you know you've got the thinning right. If you can't see anything, you know the wood's too damn thick: no goshawks are going to use it, because they can't fly through it."

Instead of clearing large blocks of trees all at once, the foresters now fell and replant relatively small areas in succession, to ensure that if one nesting site is removed, another is available not far off. Seen from a distance, the result is an attractive mosaic made up of trees of different species and ages.

Khan looks on his work as "a vast

copicing job. Once you've got the right trees, of the right ages, in the right places, you can manipulate the birds of prey. With luck, they'll go where you want them to, rather than keep moving all over the place so you can't work the forest properly."

Human beings have to be controlled as well. Egg thieves are always a potential menace in spring, and so are a minority of twitchers, among whom the latest fad is to tick off Schedule One species at their nest sites. If they approach close enough to disturb the birds, they can be prosecuted, but so can the foresters: officious watchers are often lurking, ready to report any intrusion. This means that during the nesting season no felling, thinning or planting can take place within 250 metres of a nest site.

It is hardly surprising that under such a favourable, enlightened regime, the goshawks are doing better than ever in living memory.

NATURE NOTES

BEETLE BANKS - a new phenomenon - are low ridges of earth about 4ft wide and 2ft high. They are heaped across fields by a couple of passes in each direction with the plough, and planted with various kinds of grass and flowers. Their role is to harbour predatory insects, which spend the winter in the grass, and then in spring march out into the arable crops alongside, where they devour pests such as aphids, thus reducing the amount of pesticides that the farmer needs to use.

Over the past five years research at the Game Conservancy Council's experimental farm at Loddington, in Leicestershire, has shown that ground beetles, rove beetles and spiders spread out as far as 200yds on either side of the banks, and eat a worthwhile number of pests. The thick, tussocky grass, which is never cut, has also proved congenial to partridges, which nest in it, and to harvest mice, which take up residence on the banks. This, in turn, is of benefit to kestrels, which can often be seen hunting overhead.

Planting wild flowers such as oxeye daisies and knapweed has attracted hover flies, parasitic wasps and bumblebees, all of which are beneficial. Humble artefacts though they may be, beetle banks are doing a good job.

DUFF HART-DAVIS

WHAT'S ON THIS WEEKEND

IT'S GARLIC a-go-go this weekend on the Isle of Wight. Tuck into a garlic ice-cream followed by a pint of garlic beer or a piece of garlic fudge as you marvel at the amazing exploits of an escapologist.



cowboys and Indians, fire-eaters and magicians - just a few of the exciting performers at the annual Garlic Festival in the village of Newchurch. Visit the Garlic Marquee and discover more about this versatile plant, said to prevent gangrene, ward off evil spirits and cure bronchitis. The festival includes more than 20 events and more than 250 stallholders.

Isle of Wight Garlic Festival 10am-6pm 22 and 23 August at Fighting Cocks Crossroads, Newchurch, Isle of Wight. Tickets: adults £4; senior citizens £3; children £1. Festival information: 01983-385 3111. Website: www.wightonline.co.uk/logaricfestival

SALLY KINDBERG

A nest egg of your own

Poultry are easy to care for even in well-kept family gardens. By Daniel Butler

THE RECENT dispute between two neighbours over a noisy cockerel seems to confirm popular prejudices. Hens in the garden are at best not worth the effort and at worst a source of endless trouble.

To dismiss small-scale poultry so glibly is a mistake. In fact poultry are easy and cheap to keep and most families could be self-sufficient in free-range eggs at very little cost.

To dispel the first myth, chickens are not noisy. True, a cockerel will crow at dawn, but only if given room to do so. Place his night-time perch an inch or two too high and he cannot stretch his neck and therefore cannot call.

Half a dozen birds will produce more eggs than the average household can consume. While doing this, the birds have very modest requirements. At its simplest, this consists of a fox-proof night-time shelter (this need be little more than a wooden box), a water supply and a few kitchen scraps.

There are dozens of breeds, ranging from the rare and ornate, like the brahma, to

commoner marans and Sussexes. If even these fail to appeal, ducks, guinea fowl and quail are all suitable backyard birds.

But for most people the older breeds of hen are probably best. They may not produce quite as many eggs as modern hybrids, but they can add extra colour and interest to even the best kept of gardens.

So what are the requirements? Housing is the most important consideration. All forms of poultry attract foxes and backyard chickens are no exception. Indeed, with the advent of the urban fox, which is unafraid of man and increasingly diurnal, city poultry are probably even more vulnerable than their rural cousins.

Feeding backyard poultry can be environmentally friendly. They are omnivores and most households generate enough waste to satisfy a small flock. A handful of grain and access to some calcium-rich grit (for their egg production) are the only supplements they require. If this is too much trouble, farm suppliers sell pellets for layers very cheaply.

Unfortunately, this is where one encounters one of the few significant drawbacks. Just as the birds attract foxes, so any spilled food acts as a magnet to mice and rats. Most problems can be avoided by careful husbandry - for example using suspended food containers which hang out of reach - but if problems do occur, traps and baits normally deal quickly with unwanted guests.

Of course backyard poultry will not lay as dependably as their commercial brethren. Not only are they less highly bred, but they live in more natural conditions. As a result the birds will cease laying in October and not recommence until March. (They are photoperiodic, requiring at least 12 hours of daylight to trigger their reproductive clocks.)

Commercial breeders overcome this with artificial light, but backyard poultry fanciers regard the winter break as a useful breather, allowing the birds to moult and recharge their batteries.

Another backyard problem is "broodiness". Most older

breeds will try at some point to incubate. This normally happens when eggs are allowed to accumulate in the nest box (for some reason, 13 seems to be a "trigger"), but some birds are so driven that they will incubate stones and tennis balls.

There are two drawbacks to this. Firstly, a broody hen will stop laying - quite possibly for the remainder of the season - and secondly, fertile eggs will produce chicks.

While these are undoubtedly sweet (and a valuable educational tool for children), the youngsters will need homes. As half of these will be cockerels and incapable of laying eggs, they can be difficult to place and culling can be the only option.

But ignoring these minor problems, where do you get your stock? For rare breeds it is wisest to buy from a reputable source such as a specialist farm park.

A cheaper, if less reliable, alternative is to visit a livestock market. The more philanthropic might prefer to save birds otherwise condemned to the knacker's yard by begging



A silver brahma cock

for "spent" birds from a commercial farm.

So why not give it a go? You will boost your organic gardening, gain the best tasting eggs in the world and add colour to your garden. And so what if there is an occasional cock crow? It adds colour to any neighbourhood.

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The Silver Jubilee Walkway offers the tourist many views of London, including this one of St Paul's Cathedral from across the river

Neville Elder

Take London in your stride

Follow in the leisurely footsteps of Andy Bull and see the City from a different angle, on The Silver Jubilee Walkway trail

London may be awash with holiday visitors, but few seem to realise that the best way to see the capital is on foot. And it's surprising what you can find beneath your feet in London. You may, for instance, spot a dull metallic disc the size of a dinner plate set into the pavement, engraved with the words "Silver Jubilee Walkway 1977".

It is 21 years since the Walkway, a 12-mile loop that manages to encompass London - Westminster, the West End, the City and a swath of river bank - was laid down to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Queen Elizabeth's accession to the throne.

Today, it is largely forgotten. And the discs don't really help. But if you have a Walkway map - the London Tourist Board has a few left - the Silver Jubilee Walkway is all yours.

The route splits naturally into a river walk and a city walk. I like to

start on the north side of the Thames at Tower Bridge, at the far east of the route.

So I would begin by enjoying an excellent view of Tower Bridge, from the first floor of the Tower Thistle Hotel.

The first leg of my walk would take me across the bridge to Butler's Wharf and from there I'd head west, past HMS Belfast and the nightmare of Minister Court, with its cluster of steep, curly roofs and turt-coloured marble cladding.

The riverside starts to become grand - a mix of modern company headquarters and the huge Hay's Galleria Pass beneath London Bridge and the mood changes again. Here is Southwark Cathedral looking squat and grubby. Inside it is a different world, a vast, blond, sandy cave of light.

A few steps away is Shakespeare's Globe. Just beyond, Cardinal Cap Alley is said to be the

spot at which Wren watched his re-created St Paul's take shape. Certainly this view of the cathedral is one of the best.

From here you realise that London is not a high-rise city at all. If it were, how could so many of the city's

Wren churches poke their towers above the surrounding rooftops? From outside the former Bankside power station an information panel mounted at the riverside identifies half a dozen of them.

Take a quick stroll on to Black-

friars. This is where you realise that no fewer than five bridges have flitted past. On the riverside stretches of the Silver Jubilee Walkway, the whole of London is brought within easy reach. And from the Oxo Tower, the bar offers fantastic views towards Hampstead Heath.

The stretch from South Bank to County Hall is one of the most pleasant. The river here is full of boats. Behind them is the white stone summit of the Shell Mex building. Nearby at night, the giant, luminous blue Fifties jukebox which is above Charing Cross station adds to the variety.

Past Hungerford Bridge is County Hall, now boasting a Marriott hotel and a health spa. Then it's on beneath Westminster Bridge and the view across to the Houses of Parliament, before Lambeth Palace, where you leave the river bank via Lambeth Bridge.

From here the Silver Jubilee

Walkway takes on an entirely different character, runs around the Parliament Square side of the Houses of Parliament and darts down Great George Street and through St James's Park to The Mall. Skirting Trafalgar Square, it makes for Leicester Square, then through the back streets to Covent Garden.

Now you enter the City, passing first through Lincoln's Inn Fields and Fleet Street, with St Paul's like an oasis at the top of Ludgate Hill.

From here the walkway dips south down Peters Hill and then follows Queen Victoria Street to the point where it meets Poultry, Princes Street, Cornhill and King William Street, at the crossroads of the financial world.

Then it is down King William Street, with the gilded flaming urn on the top of the Monument ahead, and the dark, cool sanctuary of St Mary Woolnoth to your left.

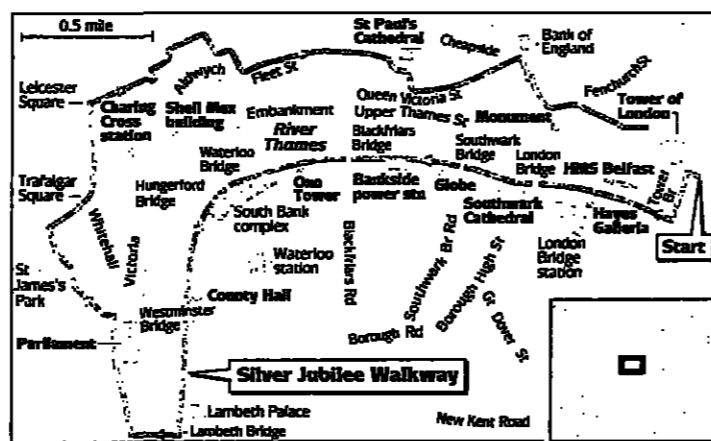
Slightly to the south of the walk-

way is the Monument to the Great Fire, a fluted Doric column of Portland stone completed by Wren in 1677. It bears the legend that, over three days in 1666, 13,000 houses were lost. It is 202ft tall, which is exactly the same distance from the baker's shop in Pudding Lane where the fire started.

Continue south down Fish Street Hill and you come to another wonderful church, St Magnus Martyr, of which T.S. Eliot wrote in *The Waste Land*: "... inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold".

But the most magical moment is yet to come. It is when, as you pass down Eastcheap and Great Tower Street, Tower Bridge comes back into view. And you know that you have really seen London.

For the Silver Jubilee Walkway booklet call at the London Tourist Board's office at Victoria station (0171-370 7744)



In search of little Green Men

What hidden secrets lurk in ecclesiastical details on hallowed ground? By Christona Zaba

IT WAS in Troyes, in France, that I first met the Green Man. I was examining the detail on a fine 14th-century rood when I looked up. And there he was, high above, watching. Leaves flowed from his mouth and nose, and leaves issued from the corners of his eyes. He seemed extraordinarily alive; though he was wholly of stone, I could have sworn he winked.

Once met, never forgotten. I began to see him everywhere. It is a common phenomenon among Green Man enthusiasts, as the scholar Ruth Wylie confirms. "Once you notice him, he's all over the place," she says. "Some foliage heads are very old: the oldest known instance is on a fourth-century tomb in Poiriers. You find them across Europe, from Russia to France. There are Green Men in India, in Mexico. And two are never the same."

Like Mike Harding, featured in this afternoon's Radio 4 introduction to the Green Man, she keeps a database of foliage heads that shows no sign of

reaching completion. "Once you get hooked, there's no resisting him," she chuckles. "No one can ever find them all: new ones crop up every day."

If you want to find him yourself, it is easy. We headed for the unbelievably pretty old market town of Axbridge on the A371 towards Wells in Somerset. St John the Baptist's is a handsome 15th-century church, lovingly kept; and it doesn't take us long to find our first foliage head. The choir stalls are Victorian (the Victorians, it seems, were rather taken with Green Men), and though most are simply leafy, one has a small and distinct face among the leaves, like something out of *Alice in Wonderland*.

There's something startling about a piece of ecclesiastical decoration suddenly coming to life: almost as though it is done for a joke, I think, raising my eyes to the top of a pillar and immediately seeing another, much older and more sombre gentleman with leaves streaming out of his mouth. What is he



Mystery man: just who is the Green Man? Ruth Wylie

saying, I wonder? What is the point of these vegetative faces?

No one knows. In the north aisle, there is a medieval wooden ceiling; and, sure enough, we spot two more foliage heads up there, one mischievous, the other stern.

It is a good idea to take a torch on your Green Man searches; their faces are easily overlooked. The Green Man is nothing if not discreet.

A mile out of Axbridge lies Cheddar, home to cheese, caves, good walks, and the

post-holes of a fine Anglo-Saxon palace, dating from a time when the entire area was covered in forest, a favourite royal hunting-ground. So it is not surprising to find more Green Men here, in the ceiling of the parish church of St Andrew, on the A371 itself. There's a foliage head on a choir stall here, too; but going up the nave until you reach a step, you look up to see a different Green Man: heavily gilded, even menacing, with ears of a deer or goat, issuing a tumbled profusion of leaves and fruit and twigs. The huge yew tree outside speaks of an ancient time; a time, perhaps, when there were devils to tame. And how better to tame them than by bringing them into the church itself?

Here, medieval bench-ends depict heads and creatures full of animation; but you have to go to Wells - not the cathedral, but the more modest Church of St Cuthbert - to see foliage heads carved into the Jacobean oak of the pulpit itself.

Little satyrs, all endowed with very English-looking leafy heads, flank lively scenes from the Old Testament. Step behind this wood carving, and you'll spot some much older work in stone: on the pillar behind the pulpit, two medieval foliage heads swim up out of their nest of leaves, perfectly formed, each no bigger than a walnut. Then, when you step to the right, look up to the capital of a window arch and see, tucked away, a more primitive face still,

with a look of brooding intensity, oak leaves pouring from his mouth and nostrils; while through the window, real green leaves dance in the breeze outside.

Rumour has it that Wells Cathedral contains 44 Green Men. We found five: two in the roof bosses of the chapter-house; two in the south nave aisle, on the capital of the fifth pillar from the west end; and a splendid example, with oak leaves for ears, on a capital in the passage to the Lady Chapel. "Maybe it was a way of tipping the hat to the old religion," says Fene Howard, a cathedral guide. "You know, a belt-and-braces thing: better not leave the old gods out completely, just in case."

The leafy heads watch, and keep their secret; we will never know what they really mean. But to see them in so many forms and places is to begin to understand the story of an age of fear; when the forest concealed watching eyes; when you were never quite sure who or what was hiding, just out of view.

Directions: Take the A38 south from Bristol, or north from Junction 22 of the M5; then A371 to Wells. Other South Mendip churches with Green Men: St Michael's, Brent Knoll; St John the Baptist's, Glastonbury; and St John the Baptist's, Pilton. *The Green Man Companion and Gazetteer* by Ronald Milner, is £5.99 (SB Publications), and *The Green Man* is on Radio 4 today, at 2.30pm.

BOARD AND LODGING

DEALS FOR TRAVELLERS

A room London's newest hotel is, like the Travel Inn mentioned last week, in County Hall on the South Bank. But the Marriott (0171-928 5200) is more upmarket, offering Thames views from the majority of its 200 rooms, and a 25-metre swimming pool. The official opening takes place in a month. Until then, a room costs £193.87; this will increase by £23.50 after the opening. (The reason for these non-round numbers is that the hotel quotes prices exclusive of VAT; we have added it for you.)

A meal If you are taking up the Silver Jubilee Walk suggestion (see above), you will pass the Marriott en route. Within, and in the former GLC library, now called the Leader's Bar, Champagne Afternoon Tea is served each day between 3pm and 6pm. The price, including VAT, is £22.

A drink The Dublin Literary Pub Crawl takes place every evening at 7.30pm, and on Sundays at noon and 7.30pm. Meet upstairs at the Duke in Duke Street; call 00 353 1454 0238 for further details.

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SIMON CALDER

The best way for airlines to stamp out tariff abuse is to make all air travel ticketless

THANKFULLY, IT is a less serious matter than, say, substance abuse. But the world's airlines are worried by tariff abuse. The definition: "People book in one class of travel and then, by deceit, get to travel in a higher class for which they have not paid."

Isn't this just an upgrade by another name? Not according to the Board of Airline Representatives UK, the trade association for airlines flying to and from Britain. The organisation's new handbook says tariff abuse, as defined above, is a fraud costing the airlines millions.

A popular trick, apparently, is to get hold of some revalidation stickers - those tiny slips of paper that are stuck to your ticket when you change a flight reservation - and simply write "C" for business or "F" for first, instead of economy. Another ruse is for an unscrupulous travel agent (could there possibly be such a thing?) to make a booking in one class but issue the ticket in another.

Airlines have the biggest, most powerful civilian computer systems in the world. You'd imagine any discrepancy would be picked up at check-in. But tariff abusers take advantage of the fact that, outside their home countries, airlines aren't usually handled by their own staff. The check-in officials may be unfamiliar with the airline's computer codes and fail to spot the deception.

Yet where does trying for an upgrade become tariff abuse? Is an economy-class passenger who turns left instead of right upon entering the aircraft, in a bid to bag a business-class seat, committing a similar fraud? The best hope for airlines is to make all air travel ticketless, but no doubt someone will still find an electronic loophole.

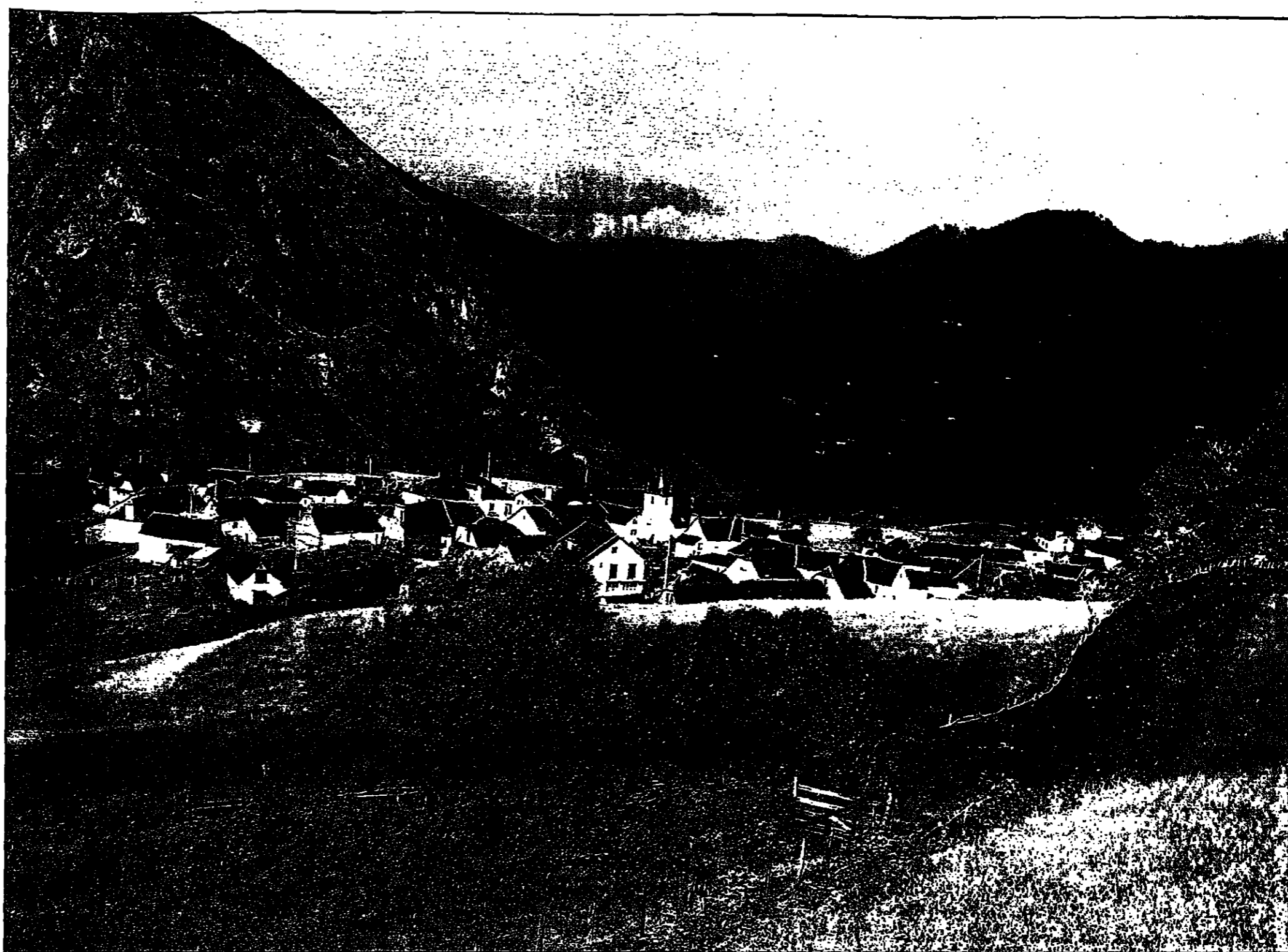
THE DIRECTORY section of the Bar UK handbook gives each airline the chance to present itself in the best light. Air Algeria is circumspect about the impact of the tragic civil war: "In spite of a considerable drop in demand for air travel to Algeria, the airline has successfully ridden the storm and diversified both products and prices to meet customer demand."

Singapore Airlines, which prides itself on in-flight service, reveals that when it was founded in 1947 "There were no cabin crew on board and the only refreshment available was iced water." An airline from the Gulf, meanwhile, reveals its new marketing ploy: "Qatar Airways is no longer a dry airline, and offers a superb choice of champagnes and wines."

Aerolineas Argentinas says it "links London with Argentina nine times a week". But the national carrier stopped flying from Britain to Buenos Aires two years ago, and now gets no closer than Madrid.

For that flight to Argentina, then, why not try United's daily service from Heathrow? After all, as the handbook says, "United Airlines is the world's largest air carrier (with) a route network which spans 32 countries". One of the longest flights is UA 979, which takes off every night from London, destination Buenos Aires. Sort of.

The flight is actually just one of the four daily departures to New York, where you change planes for the onwards leg to Argentina. The whole journey takes more than 19 hours. It is enough to drive you to a spot of tariff abuse.



Larrau, France: a tiny Basque village, high in the Pyrenees mountains, where borders don't mean much

Jonathan Blair/Corbis

A land without borders

In the Pyrenean foothills lies a corner of France which is forever Basque. By Natasha Edwards

How can you not fall for a place where every word seems to be made up of Xs, Ks and Zs? Signposts and posters - place names are often in both French and Euskara - bear tongue-twisting constructions which mean that although fluent in French, this small corner of France remains delightfully foreign to me.

Unlike their Spanish counterparts, the French Basques, although proudly Basque, seem largely content to be French. The landscape is gentler physically as well as politically: less populated and less industrialised. Although the hills towards Pamplona in the rainshadow of the Pyrenees can be harsh and dry in the Labourd, the most westerly section, it's wet, lush rolling hills, little streams, maize fields and sheep pastures with dramatic mountain peaks looming up behind.

What struck us most during our stay last week were the massive Labourdian farmhouses with their characteristic pantiled roofs, whitewashed walls, and dark red or green shutters and half-timbering. Many look as if they could easily sleep a family of 30: unsurprising, as the *etxe*, or house, habitually held both the extended family (parents, the heir and his relations plus any unmarried siblings), and the animals; even today, barn and dwelling form one unit. These houses were so closely entwined with family identity, that their names often became a form of surname.

A CAR is essential for visiting the Pays Basque. Natasha Edwards paid £120 for the P&O ferry from Portsmouth to Cherbourg in Normandy. The shortest crossing to western France, on the Superstar Express, takes 2hrs 45mins; other boats between 5-9 hours. P&O also runs boats to Bilbao in northern Spain (about 130km from Sare).

After discovering the village of Sare by accident a couple of years ago, we decided this summer to rent our own *etxe*, or half of one, on a hill. It came complete with massive fireplace, and six fat sheep and a greedy goat - the latter tethered to the pear tree to prevent it eating everything in sight.

Sare is a particularly well-preserved Basque village, with its central cluster of 17th and 18th-century houses set around a handsome church; a handful of small satellite hamlets and wayfarers' chapels also litter the valley. At 15km inland it is near enough for outings to the beach and sampling the Atlantic surf, yet far enough from beach culture to feel ensconced in village life.

Our favourite village is elegant Ascain, but it is just one of several in the area worth exploring. Another is Ainhoe, a former bastide town on the route to Compostela that even today is little more than a row of noble old houses along a

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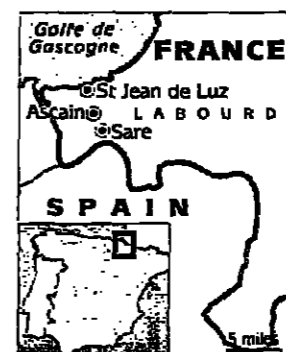
Another option would be to fly to Bordeaux (approx 215km from Sare) and hire a car on arrival.

Natasha Edwards rented her apartment (2,000F for one week, prices vary) from a list available at the Syndicat d'Initiative at Sare (00 33 5 59 54 20 14). Rentals run Saturday to Saturday.

Rural houses/flats in and

around Sare can also be rented through Gites de France (00 33 5 59 80 19 13).

Hotels in the village centre include the simple Hotel Lastiry (00 33 5 59 54 20 07), double room 185F-270F, and the more elegant Hotel Arraya (00 33 5 59 54 20 46), double room 395F-595F. Both hotels have restaurants.



single main street. Both Espelette, with its fiery red pimentos hanging from the rafters that ensure the food in this area is the spiciest in French cuisine, and busy St-Pée-sur-Nivelle, have typical red and white houses and a wonderful church. Men traditionally sit upstairs during services, and the women in the nave.

Alongside religion, sport figures prominently in the area. This is the heart of French rugbydom and also of Force Basque, the local equivalent of the Highland Games. But the quintessential Basque sport is *pelote*. The game, a sort of cross between fives, squash and real tennis, takes various forms (the *pelote* itself being the ball). The curved *pelote fronton* is a focal point of every village - at Sare taking pride of place alongside the church and arcaded town hall.

The traditional version, *brinquet*, is played with bats in an indoor court, and the spectacular *Grand*

Baroque altarpiece, both still stand in the old town around the port.

Borders don't mean much here. The seven provinces of the Pays Basque were divided over the centuries between France and Spain, yet no one seems to have paid much attention to the divide. Although the French and Spanish halves are intriguingly different, with the Basque language as common denominator, border hopping is a favourite pastime of French teenagers. They cross the frontier for the tapas bars and nightclubs of the Spanish resort of San Sebastian.

In Sare, once you start exploring the forest lanes and backroads it's almost impossible not to cross back and forth over the border between here and the nearest Navarrese town of Bera. Consequently the area was once a smugglers' paradise, and is still traversed by the old trails used to carry contraband over the frontier. A favourite walk is along the old

contrabandiers' route that climbs over the mountain from Sare to Zugarramurdi in Spain. A sort of legacy continues in the *ventas*, cut-price trading houses that dot the border although now supposedly rendered obsolete by the European single market. Curiosity demanded a visit to the *Venta Bergara*, an isolated house that quadruples as local bar, basic grocer, essential outfitters (sheepskin slippers in August) and purveyor of woefully tacky souvenirs.

At some point every visitor is likely to climb La Rhune, the mountain that symbolises the western Pyrenees, either by foot - the Pays Basque is excellent walking country - or like us, with a two-month-old baby, the easy way, on the train. We queued for over an hour to board, but the wait was amply repaid. The panorama comprises layer upon layer of mountains, and the sweep of coast beyond. Equally rewarding is the train itself, its original rack and pinion mechanism an engineering feat as it climbs at dramatic angles on its route past wild Pottok ponies, sheep and buzzards.

Most of the hills in the region are beautifully unspoiled but it's somehow only appropriate that the summit here is a nugget of tourist kitsch, marked by a monument to the Empress Eugénie (a summer resident of Biarritz), who climbed to the top in 1859, and three cafe-cum-souvenir shops that straddle the border. It was a last piece of border-hopping made easy, but this area is addictive: we'll be back for more hills and tongue-twisting.

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Visitors to Rome can take advantage of Europe's first sensible fleet of electric buses. These bright orange vehicles, resembling outsize milkfloats, provide access to the narrow, cobbled streets that bigger buses cannot reach. With huge windows, you get a far better view than from other buses or

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Here's the plan. On a postcard write your name, home address and telephone number, together with your date of birth, gap-year destination and travel dates, and send it to Boots Gap Year Cover Competition, PO Box 193, Nottingham, NG5 2HA. The first 1,500 applicants will then receive a small gnome to accompany them on their travels. Other applicants may enter this competition using an appropriate mascot of their choice, but they must also send in all their details first.

Then all we ask is that, during your travels, you photograph your gnome/mascot in the most unusual and imaginative locations. When you have your film developed, send us a selection of your favourite pictures. (Details of how and where will be included with the information that you will be sent after sending your postcard – which must be received by 30 September 1999.)

Every two months selected pictures will be published in the travel pages of *The Independent* – in the October and December issues and then in the February, April, June and August 1999 issues. The final closing date for pictures will be 17 September 1999. The winning pictures will be published on 2 October 1999, just before the start of the academic year, and all winners will be invited to attend a party to be held before 18 December 1999.

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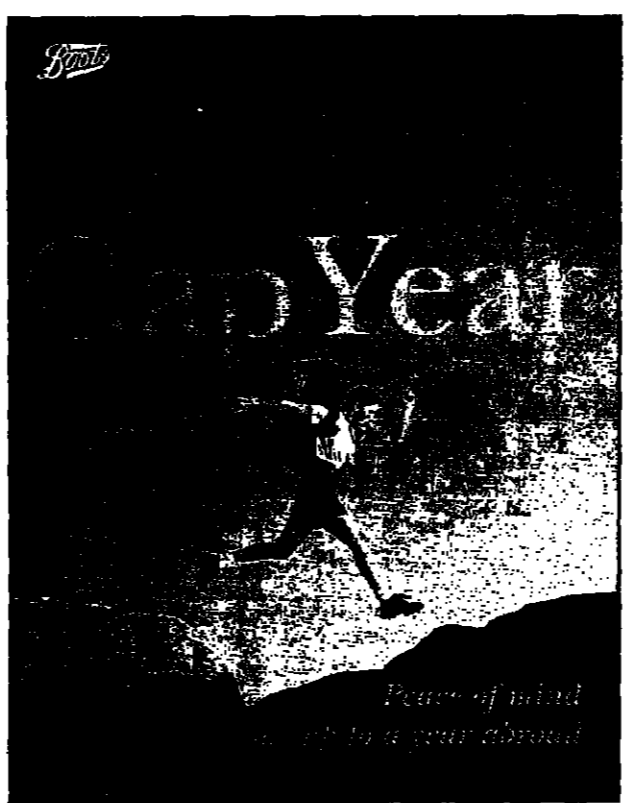
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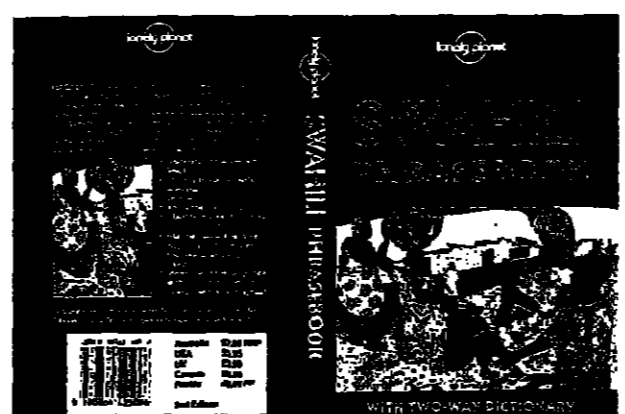
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Information concerning your application may be shared among Boots and Royal & Sun Alliance Insurance and their respective subsidiaries, agents, and sub-contractors. Members of Boots and other organisations may occasionally advise you of other products and services which may be of interest. If you would prefer not to receive such information, please say so on your postcard. The competition is open to all qualifying residents of the UK, excluding employees and families of Boots and its subsidiaries. The independent and its associated companies and *Lonely Planet* and its subsidiaries. The judges' decision is final and no correspondence can be entered into. Prizes are as stated. The overall winners will be notified by post or telephone, as appropriate.



Torres Del Paine National Park – a long way from Shrewsbury

Rob Crandall

When school's out in Santiago

Rhiannon Batten took her year out in 1992, and after a series of adventures ended up in the wilds of Chile

THE FIRST time I remember getting truly drunk was at the start of my year out. The next 12 months carried on in much the same way: sipping pisco sours in Chile, discovering wine in France and getting merry on coca tea in Bolivia.

Although none of my friends from sixth-form college was taking a gap year, I didn't want to go straight to university. All I really wanted to do after my A levels was lie on a beach. The first rule of any gap year is "use your contacts": fortunately, some family friends had thoughtfully and conveniently relocated themselves to the Cayman Islands.

On this particular day we'd taken a boat to the appropriately named Rum Point. I sat at the beach bar gulping Kahua cocktails far too quickly, and then spent the rest of the day suffering.

Although my gap year got off to an intoxicating start, reality soon hit and I spent most of the time back in Shrewsbury working at WH Smith to save enough money to travel. On the days I wasn't at work, I trekked off to university open days and to visit friends at college, who all seemed to be partying wildly and having a much better time than me.

Eventually, on New Year's Eve (the only day for which I could get a ticket), I flew to South America and celebrated New Year in the air with a deaf German-speaking Argentinian and the New Year parcel a friend had made up for me in lieu of being at the usual Shrewsbury gathering.

When we flew over the Andes, I wrote in my diary that I'd never seen anything so beautiful in my life.

My mum's schoolfriend, Susan, was waiting for me with a grin and a hug at Santiago airport in Chile. I brought out half-coated chocolate biscuits and the latest *Coronation Street* storylines in return for the best base I could possibly have had in South America.

Although visiting Santiago wasn't exactly like canoeing down the Amazon or trekking up a Colombian hillside, this was a town where coffee came served with a glass of water, and couples seduced each other dancing to cued.

Dragging myself from the cosmopolitan pleasures of Santiago, I took the overnight train to Puerto Montt in the Chilean lake district. The train was like something from an Agatha Christie novel – all dark wood and velvet-covered seats, and a courteous

little man came and made up the beds with crisp linen sheets.

Luxuries like that were few and far between, with Shrewsbury not having been a font of fabulous wealth. So I mostly stayed at youth hostels to save money. These varied from a floor in a schoolroom in Puerto Montt to a fabulous wooden mansion in Osorno.

At Puerto Natales, almost at the southernmost tip of Chile, the hostel was full of local girls on holiday so we all spent our time gossiping and dancing to the summer hit, "La Fachanga".

To trek around Torres Del Paine National Park – crammed with glaciers, jagged granite rocks and gently baked pastures – I hooked up with the only option of company. Michael, who was from Colwyn Bay, was also staying at the hostel.

We proudly made "lents" from plastic sheeting and stocked up on camping food before realising we needn't have bothered. It wasn't very dry and it certainly wasn't warm and our specially bought rations were years out-of-date, so we had to munch on whitened chocolate and soggy spaghetti.

Michael spent the whole time trying to impress me, but I'd already met a beautiful Argentinian in Puerto Natales and Michael just could not compete.

I made it back to Susan's farm for Cosecha '93, the February grape harvest, and spent my birthday in the giant frigorífico where the fruit is stored, packing grapes. It was strange wearing woolly hats and jumpers when outside it was around 30°C. I still had just enough time to go north to San Pedro de Atacama and get bronchitis in Bolivia before flying home.

The travel bug had got me, though. Before long, I was working as an au pair in France, looking after William and Yvan. On my days off by the pool in Valence, eating sticky French peaches, slabs of goats' cheese and turning brown, or cycling out to Mirmande – a miniature inland St Ives with steep winding lanes and clusters of artists' studios.

I'd get to the top of the village and sit and imagine university life – and wonder how the glamorous black-tie cocktail parties mentioned in the Oxford student handbook would compare with evenings spent sipping Kahua at Rum Point or drinking mate with my Argentinian in Puerto Natales.

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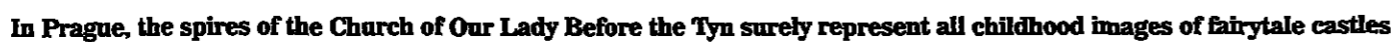
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Standing listening in that little cobbled square that night I'd questioned the possibility of so much



Jeffrey Aaronson/Colorific

Thirty years ago Russian tanks rolled into what is now the Czech Republic. The Liverpool poet **Brian Patten** will never forget the haunting and poignant beauty of the capital, Prague

night is another matter. At night Tyn - like much else - is illuminated and light bounces off the numerous

opens and Twelve Apostles peer out one after the other, while below them a skeleton (Death) pulls on a

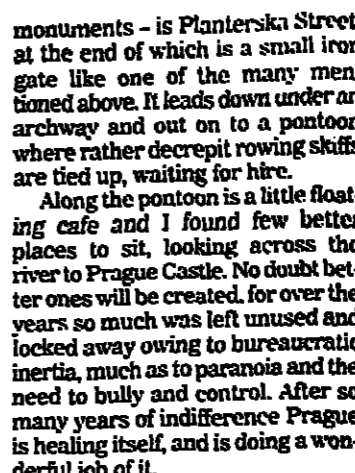
cocks, and the vendors were making them crow whenever a figure of Judas appeared – but no, nothing so

paint flaking from buildings like snow, do not seem depressing sights at all. There's a romance about

original crossing over the River Vltava dating from 1357, and one of the city's most remarkable

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Of course the city is not solely about the past. The hotels and new restaurants (with what is surely Europe's worst food) are buzzing, and daily it seems a new bar or café has been opened, often by expatriates — a community dominated by young Americans and Irish, all of whom seem intent on recreating the Paris of Hemingway in the Prague of Havel.

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NEW FILMS

LE BOSSU (15)

Director: Philippe de Broca
Sutrophenic swashbucklers are fast becoming French cinema's stock-in-trade. This effort doesn't break much new ground, but is acted and shot with such magnificent bravado that its lack of originality is never a problem. Who cares about the clichés when the storytelling is so vivid?
Limited release

GADJO DILO (15)

Director: Tony Gatlif
Stephane (Romain Duris), a young Parisian, sets out on a quest for Nora Luca, the gypsy singer whose music he discovered through his father. Stephane learns gradually about the habits, superstitions and, above all, the music of his gypsy hosts. There is a warmth and humour to the storytelling, and an integrity that pushes this film way beyond being mere sentimental travelogue.
Limited release

THE LIFE OF STUFF (U)

Director: Simon Donald
A profoundly depressing Glasgow gangland drama. Overwrought performances and direction, claustrophobic settings, melodramatic sub-John

Barry music, explosions, torture and ferocious bloodletting do little but leave you numb.
Limited release

METROLAND (18)

Director: Philip Saville
Chris (Christian Bale) is festering in suburbia, playing happy families, when his old friend Tony (Lee Ross) thinks that he ought to be out having fun. There is plenty that's likeable – especially the late-1960s Paris interlude. But back on home soil, the storytelling is less assured.
Limited release

THE X-FILES (15)

Director: Rob Bowman
The X-Files looks splendid on the big screen: director Rob Bowman and director of photography, Ward Russell, have concocted some awe-inspiring compositions. David Duchovny and Gillian Anderson reprise their TV roles as Mulder and Scully, and are most engaging, through little dialogue and even less facial movement they manage to convey great tenderness.
Countrywide

Geoffrey Macnab and Ryan Gilbey

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS



Film Ryan Gilbey

LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND is still around. Who would have thought that a love story about an ageing English writer's obsession with an American teen idol could engage so well with audiences? But then the writer-director Richard Linklater has some tricks up his sleeve – a talent for translating ideas into images; and, of course, John Hurt (left), our national treasure.
On release

Some interesting movies at the Edinburgh Film Festival today: Hal Hartley's *The Hook of Life*, with Martin Donovan as Jesus returning to earth via JFK airport, his lovely assistant Magdalena, played by the singer Polly Harvey, in tow; *Love is the Devil* has been winning admirers wherever it has been shown, particularly for Derek Jacobi, who gives heart, soul and other vital organs as Francis Bacon; meanwhile, try and make room for *I Want You*, described as a "seaside noir", it is the latest film by the intriguing Michael Winterbottom (*Jude*, *Welcome to Sarajevo*).
Various venues; call 0131-623 8030 for info



Theatre Dominic Cavendish

CATALAN director Calixto Bieito has triumphed with his

staging of Calderon de la Barca's 1635 fable about the nature of reality. *Life is a Dream* (right). With a new translation, a startling design and a hypnotic performance from George Anton as the Polish prince who finds himself bouncing between the insanities of prison and court, this is not to be missed.

Royal Lyceum, Edinburgh (0131-229 9697) 2.30pm, 7.30pm
Meanwhile in London, Thomas Middleton's satire on social disguise *A Mad World, My Masters*, written only a few decades before de la Barca's work, gets the breezy revival it deserves at the hands of Sue Lefson.



Shakespeare's Globe, London SE1 (0171-401 9919) 7.30pm

GENERAL RELEASE

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD (U)

A perfect antidote to the bombast of *Armageddon* can be found in Michael Curtiz's merry and inventive romp.

ARMAGEDDON (12)

This deeply stupid film purports to be a tender love story, a meaty action adventure and a global disaster movie in which a meteor is on a collision course with Earth.

BARNEY'S GREAT ADVENTURE (U)

Feature-length exploits for the big, jolly dinosaur. Ideal for the undemanding pre-school viewer, an endurance test for anyone else.

CITY OF ANGELS (12)

Nicolas Cage plays an angel puzzling over whether to exchange divinity for domestic bliss with Meg Ryan.

DR DOLITTLE (PG)

The thought of Eddie Murphy functioning within the restrictions of a PG certificate may not be promising, but this snappy film shows that his talents are more pliable than they might first have appeared.

EVE'S BAYOU (15)

Rites-of-passage drama set in Louisiana locations which have been devalued by too many Southern Comfort ads. Despite some intuitive observations, this feels for the most part like reheated *Fried Green Tomatoes*.

FIRELIGHT (15)

Starchy 19th-century melodrama starring Sophie Marceau as a Swiss governess who bears a child for the wealthy aristocrat Stephen Dillane, then devotes the rest of her life to finding the girl.

GANG RELATED (15)

A new thriller which gives a few welcome twists to the formulaic routine of drive-by shootings and jive-talking homeboys.

THE GINGERBREAD MAN (15)

The routine level of *The Gingerbread Man* disappoints and only odd fragments remind you that here we have a great director marking time. When Robert Duvall's buddies spring him from an asylum in a weird nocturnal dance – only then do we get a glimpse of another, less formulaic sort of film.

GODZILLA (PG)

The team which cooked up *Independence Day* is generally very adept at constructing enjoyable adventures. Here, their touch has deserted them.

GREASE (20TH-ANNIVERSARY EDITION) (PG)

Twentieth-anniversary reissue of the nostalgic high school musical.

THE LITTLE MERMAID (U)

This sprightly adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen's story – rereleased for the summer holidays – began a string of hits for the rejuvenated Disney Studios.

LOVE AND DEATH ON LONG ISLAND (15)

See *The Independent Recommends*, above.

LOST IN SPACE (PG)

Yet another cult 1960s television series gets an expensive makeover. William Hurt stars as a frosty scientist who journeys with his family into space to save the Earth from destruction and learns how to bond with his kids in the process.

MAD CITY (15)

Disparagingly simple drama in which Dustin Hoffman plays a weaselly reporter caught in a hostage situation in a museum, where disgruntled ex-employee John Travolta has produced a gun.

THE MAGIC SWORD: QUEST FOR CAMELOT (U)

The first full-length product of Warner's new animation division, this looks and sounds even cheesier than the average Disney effort. But there's an edge of genuine weirdness that will keep parents entertained, if it doesn't scare the children out of their wits.

THE OBJECT OF MY AFFECTION (15)

Comedy in which Paul Rudd confounds his flatmate Jennifer Aniston's dreams of weddings and joint burial plots by being gay.

PAULIE (U)

Once the muse of indie legend John Cassavetes, Gena Rowlands here has the chance to work with a talking parrot. Voiced by Jay Mohr, Paulie is the wise-cracking bird who takes a wry look at human foibles in this likeable kids' movie.

PSYCHO (15)

I envy anyone who will get their first taste of *Psycho* with this new print. Imagine not being fluent in Hitchcock's language of tricks and seeing the Bates Motel for the very first time.

SIX DAYS, SEVEN NIGHTS (12)

Now too old and craggy to be leaping from trains, Harrison Ford here tries to reinvent himself as a romantic hero. The result is an old-fashioned and implausibly contrived romantic comedy in which Ford plays a boozey pilot who crash-lands with New York magazine editor Anne Heche on a remote island.

THE WEDDING SINGER (12)

Shamelessly dumb but very winning Eighties-set comedy about a romantic wedding singer (Adam Sandler) who falls for a waitress (Drew Barrymore), only to find that she's already engaged to someone else.

ZERO EFFECT (15)

Pleasant thriller starring Bill Pullman as Daryl Zero, the world's greatest private investigator. Ryan O'Neal also makes a rare screen appearance.

CINEMA

ABERDEEN

ODEON (01224-587160): *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *The Avengers* (12); *Armageddon* (12); *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *Lost In Space* (PG); *The X-Files* (15); *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

VIRGIN 0541-550502: *The Avengers* (12); *The X-Files* (15); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U); *The Little Mermaid* (U); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Lost In Space* (PG); *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *Armageddon* (12); *Godzilla* (PG); *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (PG); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG)

BIRMINGHAM
MAC (0121-440 3838): *Different For Girls* (15); *Wild Things* (18); *The Girl With Brains in Her Feet* (15); *Stiff Upper Lips* (15)

ODEON (0121-643 2040): *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *The Wedding Singer* (12); *Anastasia* (U); *The X-Files* (15); *Lost In Space* (PG); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U); *Armageddon* (12); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *The Little Mermaid* (U); *Mars Attacks!* (12); *The Avengers* (12); *The Replacement Killers* (18); *Godzilla* (PG)

ARCADIAN CENTRE VIRGIN (0121-555177): *Godzilla* (PG); *The Avengers* (12); *Gang Related* (15); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U); *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *The X-Files* (15); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *The Little Mermaid* (U); *Armageddon* (12); *Grease* (20th Anniversary Edition) (PG); *Lost In Space* (PG); *Dr Dolittle* (PG)

GREAT PARK VIRGIN 0121-453 0455: *The X-Files* (15); *Godzilla* (PG); *The Wedding Singer* (12); *Paulie* (U); *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (PG); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *The Avengers* (12); *Armageddon* (12); *Sliding Doors* (15); *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *The Little Mermaid* (U); *Grease* (20th Anniversary Edition) (PG); *Lost In Space* (PG); *Six Days, Seven Nights* (12); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U)

BURY
WARNER VILLAGE (0161-766 2410): *The X-Files* (15); *The Avengers* (12); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Star Kid* (PG); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *Godzilla* (PG); *Dr Se* (NC); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *Lost In Space* (PG); *The Little Mermaid* (U); *Girls' Night* (15)

CARLISLE
CITY CINEMA (01228-514654): *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *The Avengers* (12); *Godzilla* (PG); *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U)

LONGDALE CINEMAS (01228-514654): *The Little Mermaid* (U); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *Lost In Space* (PG); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U); *Moose Hunt* (PG); *Armageddon* (12); *The X-Files* (15)

CHESTER
ODEON (01244-343216): *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *Armageddon* (12); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *Anastasia* (U); *The Avengers* (12); *The X-Files* (15); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Lost In Space* (PG)

VIRGIN CINEMA (0541-555158): *The Magic Sword: Quest For Camelot* (U); *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (PG); *The Avengers* (12); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Lost In Space* (PG); *Godzilla* (PG); *Barney's Great Adventure* (U); *The X-Files* (15); *Armageddon* (12); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *The Little Mermaid* (U)

EDINBURGH

ABC FILM CENTRE (0131-229 3030): *The X-Files* (15); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *Armageddon* (12)

ABC WESTER HAIRES (0131-453 2494): *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *The Little Mermaid* (U); *The Avengers* (12); *Armageddon* (12); *The Horse Whisperer* (PG); *The X-Files* (15); *Godzilla* (PG); *Dr Dolittle* (PG); *Lost In Space* (PG)

EFF: CAMEO (0131-228 4141): *La Parole d'Amore* (Estate) (The Notes Of Love) (NC); *Baby Angel* (Angelchek, aka Sela Rados) (NC); *Cube* (NC); *Titanic Town* (NC); *Get Real* (NC); *Stam* (NC); *The Boys* (NC); *Urban Ghost Story* (NC); *Smoke Signals* (NC); *Exotica* (NC); *I Want You* (NC); *PI* (NC); *Tie Tac* (NC); *Bedroom And Hallways* (NC); *Memory And Desire* (NC); *Geoff* (NC); *Sharon* (NC); *Truth Or Dare* (NC); *Book Of Life* (NC); *Drinking Fats* (Pier O' Dessein) (NC); *Conan* (NC); *La Chanson* (Same Old Song) (NC); *Stam* (NC); *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (18); *Terra Nova* (NC); *Baby Angel* (Angelchek, aka Sela Rados) (NC); *April* (NC); *Character* (Karaker) (NC); *Only One* (NC); *Moon Over Broadway* (NC); *Get Real* (NC); *Souvenir* (NC); *Dance Of Dust* (Raghs-E-Hak) (NC); *Terra Nova* (NC); *The Tichborne Claimant* (NC); *The Governors* (NC); *Cousin Bette* (NC); *Welcome Back, Mr McDonald* (NC); *Mad* (NC); *Tartan Shorts* (NC); *Sharon* (NC); *Truth Or Dare* (NC); 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...you give the impression of
...ad this week. If you feel odd
...re suffering from a retrograde
...ing you away from the world of
...e moon, back to the corporate
...is time they will not change you,
...e them (they won't like that,
...shareholders). From tomorrow
...ower structures wobbling.
...element.

ITV/Regions

ITV/Regions

N Ireland As EBC1 London
except: **2.25 Town Challenge 3.50**
Save the Heartland 3.50 + 4.00
Lichurn Shopping Week, 1990

Anglia
As LWT except: 12.30 Anglia
News Sunday Supplement (73658)
2.00 **Great Places of the East**
(6878) **2.30 Film: The Alamo**
(8184615) **5.15 Timon's Court:**
Churches (109521) **5.45 On the**
Box (847871) **6.05 Anglia News**
(750052) **12.45 Film: The Odessa**
File (32731724) **3.00 Planet Rock**
Profiles (37160) **3.30 ITV at the**
Belfort Festival (419591) **4.30**
Members Only (64691983) **4.55**
ITV Nightscreen (57083618) **5.00**
Newsnight (573911)

Central
As LWT except: 12.30 Life
Line (72651471) 12.35 Central
Newsweek (6522656) 12.55

Central News (888-406-9111) 1.20
Highway to Heaven (2166675) 2.5
Film: The Vikings (35424897) 5.5
Headliners (13463231) 5.40
Catchphrase (726694) 6.10
Central News (648878) 3.30
Motor Racing (41989) 4.30
Jobfinder (14989) 5.00
Spotlight: Asia (77960)

HTV Wales
As LWT except: 12.15 Link
(6055120). 12.25 Dateline Sunday
(4822472). 12.55 HTV News
(88840657). 2.00 Film, Van Ryan's
Express (7217). 4.00 Murder. She
Wrote (8339101). 4.50 Baywatch
(3065304). 5.40 Soccer Sunday

HTV West
As HTV Wales except: 12.25
Dinosaurs (4822472). 2.00 The
Antiques Sports Show (6878). 2.3
Film: Survive the Savage Sea
(72833675). 4.10 Can You Keep a

Secret? (7035385). **4.40** Doll's House (5548507). **5.10** Run with the Ball (1346323). **5.40** West Match Plus (726694).

Meridian
As LWT except: 12.30 Out of Town (6523385). **12.50** Meridian News (6296167). **3.00** The Pier

News (320/1079), 2.00 The 101
(512/2507), 2.25 The Listings
(769/3332), 2.30 The Golf Show
(149), 3.00 Cricket Show (922/168)
3.35 Film: Police Academy 3 -
Back in Training (862/1323), 5.05
The Road Show (1347052), 5.35
Birdwatch (727323), 6.05 Mendia

Westcountry
As LWT except: 12.30
 Westcountry Weekend Match
 (73168). **2.00** The View from Here
 (56287). **3.00** Film: On Golden
 Pond (85675). **5.00** The Antiques

Sports Show (5930). 5.30 Faces of
Dartmoor (965). **6.00** Westcountry
Goals Extra (842694). **6.05**
Westcountry News (750052). **12.45**
- **5.00** As Anglia.

on Sunday (73188). **2.00** Calendar
News (76921588). **2.05** Stepping
the World (23234439). **2.35** Film:
The Natural (92672236). **5.05**
Coronation Street (687830). **6.00**
Calendar News (742033). **2.25**
Film: Bhemma (554434). **4.25**
Jobfinder (8840989).

Tyne Tees
As Yorkshire except: 12.30
Come into the Garden (73168).
2.00 North East News (76921588).
2.05 Newsweek (23234438). 2.35
Something Else for the Weekend
(9918526). 3.05 Film: Three Days
of the Condor (4000014). 8.00

S4C
As Channel 4 except: 1210
 Happy Days (53789762). **12.40** Yr
 Erth - Gwasanaeth Brys
 Rhwyngwladol (19818965). **1.05** The
 Great Outdoors (51440838). **1.35**

FILM OF THE DAY



SATELLITE & CABLE

[illegible]

FULL 7-DAY TV AND RADIO LISTINGS APPEAR IN 'THE INFORMATION'

هكذا من اجل

15/11/55

ACROSS: 5 Clear, 8 Parterre (Cleopatra), 9 Cheat, 10 Reluctant, 11 Sixty, 16 Radial, 17 League, 18 Try, 20 Poser, 24 Elephant, 25 Health, 26 Stealth, 27 Aside. DOWN: 1 Spare, 2 Prate, 3 Murex, 4 Brandy, 6 Lash-did-dih, "Acutus, 12 Barmess, 13 Affected, 14 Bat, 15 Ety, 19 Relate, 21 Speak, 22 Earth, 23 Stave.

Channel 5

1. The first step is to identify the problem or question that needs to be answered. This involves understanding the context and the specific requirements of the task.

1550

THE INDEPENDENT

22 August 1998

YOUR MONEY

PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

HOW TO MAKE IT • HOW TO SPEND IT



Is this the best motorbike in the world?

PAGE 9



Sports bras: rip-off or vital support?

PAGE 6



What's a...

They want your business and they'll dazzle with deals to get it. By Rebecca Wallwork

Battle of the airwaves



TOO MANY WRONG NUMBERS

HOWEVER meticulous your research, you cannot guard against the unpredictable.

Nick Owens, who works for London's Haringey council, chose a mobile phone deal that offered free itemised billing. But right from the start he was charged for his bills.

He contacted the high street shop where he had bought his mobile, only to be told to contact the mobile company. "Neither was prepared to admit it was their responsibility."

Eventually, he was refunded for the first month's itemised bill, but continued to be charged from then on. "As you pay up-front, they don't have to offer the quality. They've got the upper hand; if you don't pay they can always cut you off. I threatened to take them to court but it seemed a waste of time."

However, his itemised bills did have one advantage as they allowed him to see which phone numbers he called and also the cost of calls. He noticed that 0181- and 0171- numbers which he called from London were being charged at peak rates. "I wrote to them but they just ignored my letters. In the end, I cancelled my direct debit and told them that any outstanding charges would cover what they owed me."

Next time round he went to a Vodafone own-shop. "So far I have had no problems, but I did spend a long time going into all the details."

Ultimate accessory or ultimate headache? Despite the many glossy package deals on offer, choosing a mobile phone has never been harder than it is today. But that is exactly what more and more of us are doing, and the number of mobile phone users is set to continue to soar.

The magic 10 million figure for mobile phones in use in the UK, about 17 per cent of the total population, is expected to be breached any day now. Hans Snook, Orange's chief executive, expects mobile phone penetration to rise from today's figure of 50 per cent of the population by 2004.

But consumer complaints have kept pace with the meteoric rise in the mobile's usage. The most common criticisms concern high costs and the proliferation of offers which leaves the potential consumer desperately seeking simplification.

Moreover, many potential users resent the often confusing, and sometimes unfair, small print in the contracts they are asked to sign by mobile phone suppliers. The legal director of the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), Pat Edwards, announced in a report on unfair contracts in March 1997: "It's time to cut the jargon and use plain English."

Part of the problem is that potential shoppers find themselves at the centre of a tug-of-war between handset suppliers, mobile telephone providers who apply different charges and "service providers" who are free to tweak deals on offer from the providers. In fact, most providers are now moving to wrest back control of the services they offer and deal directly with customers.

The good news is that the mobile phone industry appears to be listening. It is now standard for a notice period of one month to end a contract, disconnection charges are rarely applied nowadays, and most contracts include a change-of-mind period of 14 days. John Bridgeman, director-general at the OFT, says: "Consumers can now be more confident of not being confused and penalised by small print."

But even though individual companies have made a concerted effort to create comprehensive deals, shopping around today is just as complicated as it ever was. Especially when the consumer attempts to compare like with like and when deals are changing all the time in the raging price wars.

And prices are falling. A Cellnet spokeswoman says: "Prices are definitely coming down. Competition out there is getting harder and harder. Whether the fact that so many more people are taking up

mobile phones is down to price is harder to say."

In June, Vodafone reduced its standard off-peak local and national calls to 5p per minute. Orange matched that figure as well as announcing its "Network Performance Promise", a John Lewis-style guarantee to match tariffs available on rival networks.

Competition between the four leading mobile phone companies - Cellnet, One 2 One, Orange and Vodafone - is intensifying as they move closer in the prices and services they offer; and it is often only the difficulty in comparing the packaging terms that puts a gloss of difference over these similarities.

One of the fastest-growing areas in mobile phones is that of pre-payment, which has captured 23 per cent of the market within two years or so. Customers buy a phone and pay in advance for calls, rather than by monthly bills. This can be an attractive alternative to the minimum-term contract, with its monthly bills and monthly rental charge.

Recently Cellnet launched a new digital pre-pay mobile phone package called EasyLife. This comes with a Philips "Diga" handset costing £119.99: you make one call to register, purchase the airtime and start talking straightaway. There is no contract to tie you down and no monthly bills.

Topping up your call credit is simple, by using credit or debit card or by EasyLife vouchers which are

available in a wide range of outlets. Cellnet and other providers offering a similar service claim pre-pay packages are particularly popular with students and those who prefer to avoid the encumbrance of monthly bills. They pay only for what they use. Calls cost 49p per minute for all UK numbers, however, which is an expensive way of calling your girlfriend to let her know you are just on your way.

Is the future contract-free? Cellnet launched a new fair-deal programme, First, last month. It is specifically designed to remove the worry of signing up to the wrong call plan by always giving you the lowest monthly charges irrespective of which digital call plan you have signed up to. A spokeswoman says: "We monitor the call pattern each month and if it shows that the person would have benefited by, say, £12.73 from another call plan, we simply refund the money back to them."

First is free to join and the Cellnet customer can choose whether to sign a contract or not with the First in Freedom scheme. However, if you do decide to commit to Cellnet for between one- and five-year terms, you will receive call discounts of up to 15 per cent. The scheme also offers First for Families or First for Firms which offers 50 per cent discount on calls, similar to BT's Friends and Family scheme.

So fierce is the competition, such a scheme is likely to be replicated by all phone providers within the next few weeks.

"Customers have many different needs," says the Cellnet spokeswoman. "A business person will have different requirements in terms of when he or she is calling, and where, compared to a housewife. We aim to offer everyone the right deal for them."

Cellnet's initiative does beg the question of whether the plethora of different contracts available, which sometimes only serve to confuse people, really make sense. By moving people from one set of terms to another, phone providers are admitting that the market segmentation now carried out may not accurately reflect the diverse pattern of even one individual's usage.

If so, how long will it be before we return to the old-style practice of far fewer sets of charges for everyone? Weren't land lines once like that? Either way, with competition as strong as it is today, the customer really is king.

Cellnet: 0990 214000; One 2 One: 0500 500121; Orange: 0800 801080; Vodafone: 0800 101112.

More mobiles, page 2

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PERSONAL FINANCE

Make the money work

FINANCIAL MAKEOVER

NAME CHARMAYNE BEDDOWS AGE 32 OCCUPATION JOURNALIST



NIC

CICUTTI
Barclays is muscling
in on the motor
insurance business.
Its offer to undercut
renewals is tempting
but not half as
good as first appears

I'M ALL in favour of bargains, hence the new "bargain deals" section we have started running on the back of the Your Money pages. What I don't like is half-bargains, those that look good but are really no such thing. Apart from anything else, they tend to insult consumers, making them think they are really smart while secretly treating them with contempt.

Which is why, despite all the hype at the beginning of this week, the motor-cover pledge from Barclays, jointly offered with Privilege Insurance, gets a thumbs-down.

For those who missed the details in our Midweek Money pages on Wednesday, here's the deal. Barclays is offering to undercut the renewal premium on offer from another insurer, for any motorist driving any car.

Put like that, it looks like a no-brainer. After all, what sensible motorist would want to turn down the offer of saving money by making one simple call?

Well I can think of plenty of people. Let's go back to basics. Most people hate the time-consuming process of phoning up six or seven insurers every year. Many will stick with their existing motor-cover provider and will stir themselves only if the renewal cost is exorbitantly high. Insurers know this - it is, after all, how many of them make their money.

What they do is offer initial cover at a preferential rate, only to hike it up at renewal time. They bank on clients staying with them for at least two or three years and moving only when absolutely necessary.

This is where Barclays comes in. By undercutting renewals, it does offer the prospect of some savings. But those savings would almost certainly be available elsewhere and, probably, would be greater if consumers shopped around. Yet Barclays is only offering to undercut a person's existing insurer, not any quote available on the market. Moreover, the deal is available only for 12 months. After that you are on your own again.

Sure, Barclays will save some of us money. And its entry into the mass motor insurance market will force competitors to keep the cost of their renewals down, so there

are other indirect benefits for all motorists.

Yet I can't help feeling slightly cheated. After all, it is not impossible to put together a far better package than that. "Such as?" you may ask.

Well, how about simply offering to undercut any renewal premium by at least £10. There might have to be some exceptions to this deal for boy racers and those with multiple driving convictions.

I can already hear the industry muttering that such a deal is impossible. I'm not so sure. A year or two ago I was contacted by one insurance broker who wanted to discuss offering this option for readers of the Independent. And why not? After all, Indy readers are fairly careful, young but not babies, quirky but not mad, just the kind of consumer group any insurer would like to have on board - or so these blessed readership surveys would have us believe.

While the discussions foundered for some trivial reason, they indicate that some things are possible even when the perceived wisdom says they aren't. Were Barclays not so consumed by the desire to vacuum up their rivals' policyholders at minimum cost, they might have come up with something better.

As it is, motorists seeking the best deal on their car insurance still need to shop around for it, rather than rely on just one call. And Barclays leaves me with a bad taste in the mouth.

Charmayne is single, with no dependants. She works full time for a newspaper and is also a freelance journalist. Her hobbies include Thai kick-boxing and working out in the gym. She has shares, PEPs, deposit accounts and three different pension schemes. In addition, she has surplus income of £100 per month which she wishes to invest. Charmayne expects a £15,000 loan made to a relative to be repaid shortly. She would not mind taking a slightly higher investment risk with some of her savings, but would prefer the majority to reflect a fairly balanced and conservative portfolio.

The adviser: David Holland, managing director at Rik Harrison Financial Services, independent financial advisers, with offices throughout the UK (0171 929 9300).

The advice: There are a number of issues to address. First, Charmayne needs to look at her pension planning. Currently she puts £170 per month into her pension plans, with a further £80 per month being contributed by her employer into a company scheme in respect of her non-freelance earnings. This is 7.5 per cent of her total income.

If we project forward at reasonable growth rates for both her existing pension funds and continuing contributions, Charmayne's pension fund would be approximately £275,563 at age 55, or £445,911 at age 60. Using these funds to buy a single life annuity, with payments made monthly in advance, guaranteed for five years and escalating in line with the retail price index up to a maximum of 5 per cent per annum, would provide her with a pension worth about 14.26 per cent of her income prior to retirement at 55 or 19.88 per cent at 60.

She needs to contribute more towards her pension. Someone of her age is allowed to contribute up to 17.5 per cent of net relevant earnings in the current tax year into a personal pension and 15 per cent into the company scheme. She should think about doing so.

When the £15,000 loan that she has made to a member of her fam-

ily is repaid, we would recommend that she makes a £2,186 contribution to a pension policy. Once the provider has reclaimed basic rate tax from the Inland Revenue she will have a gross contribution of £2,850 invested. She would also receive higher rate tax relief on the full contribution amount resulting in a further refund of £484.50.

Charmayne has already invested £1,000 in a 1998/99 general PEP with Perpetual, and we would recommend that she uses the remaining £5,000. Perpetual has a range of funds to choose from, but now that the UK stockmarket represents slightly better value we would recommend the Perpetual High Income fund which invests in UK equities and fixed interest securities. Over the past three years it has

grown by 19.02 per cent per annum, while the average fund which has grown by only 16.13 per cent.

The remaining £7,805 should be split between the Close UK Escalator unit trust and the Fleming Claverhouse investment trust. The Escalator fund aims to track the performance of the UK market and to provide a capital guarantee equal to 95 per cent of the value of the investment each quarter. This means that your investment cannot fall by more than 5 per cent during a quarter. Gains made during the quarter are locked in at the end of the quarter and the new 95 per cent level set.

Over the past year the Claverhouse fund has grown by 40.30 per cent, compared to the average fund which has grown by 28.33 per cent. Over the past three years it has grown by 29.01 a year, compared to the average fund

which has grown by only 17.5 per cent.

Charmayne could add to these savings by putting £60 per month into the Henderson Investors Electric & General Investment trust. This fund has a broad spread of international investments and would allow her to invest money regularly into the stock market, while reducing risk by "pound-cost averaging". Over the past year Electric & General has grown by 28.75 per cent, compared to the average fund which has grown by 15.33 per cent.

Charmayne has just over £12,000 invested in the shares of BT, Lloyds, Hydrant, Northern Electric and National Grid. They reflect a moderate-risk

portfolio. The three utilities are a safe haven against the strong pound and weakness of the Asian markets and are good defensive stocks. They are still trading near all-time highs.

Lloyds is a preferred share within the banking sector and has shown a market-leading return on equity and excellence in controlling costs. We consider them to be a core holding for most portfolios. We are also very keen on BT shares, particularly since the announcement of its joint venture with AT&T.

We would not recommend any changes other than to sell £3,000 of BT shares and reinvest the proceeds into a single company PEP. This will shelter future income and gains from tax. The single company PEP offered by Killis and Co is competitive with no initial charge and, importantly, no management charge.

When Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) become available next year, Charmayne could consider investing some of the remaining shares into these accounts in order to continue to protect her investments from tax.

As a single person, Charmayne relies upon her own income to meet the cost of her living. We therefore believe it is sensible to obtain private medical insurance which would allow her access to any medical treatment should it be needed. The Prime Care Super Saver policy offered by Primehealth would provide comprehensive in-patient treatment for £20.64 per month.

As for Charmayne's instant-access cash savings, the best rate of interest currently paid by First Direct, with whom she has £3,000 invested, is 5.25 per cent gross. We suggest she switches to the Cheltenham & Gloucester's Instant Transfer telephone-operated account which pays 7.5 per cent gross for balances above £1,000. It has remained competitive and is simple to use.

If you are interested in having a free makeover from an independent financial adviser - worth hundreds of pounds - please write to Andrew Verity, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER YOU WANT TO BUILD REAL WEALTH... WHO DOESN'T? THE QUESTION IS WHERE DO YOU START?



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Douglas Moffitt, TV and Radio Financial Commentator and Editorial Director of RFI

investments and towards good ones. All expressed in easy-to-follow language. For example, let's take ways to make more money.

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• Do you know which investment is a gift to higher-rate taxpayers?
• Discover how easily your money can not just grow, but multiply, with even the most cautious, low-risk investment.
• Planning to repay your mortgage? Think again - because putting the money in TESSAs will probably get you a lot more tax-free cash.
• Do you know The Four Stages to Success? You should...
• Can you spare £1,000 a year to get over £80,000? That's how much extra you could have made using a verified strategy that takes about two minutes to understand, a few hours a year to carry out and £1,000 a year invested in an ordinary unit trust.
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Set up to do the job

Four different people need four different mobiles, finds Rebecca Wallwork

ALISON ROBLEY, solicitor, would be making national calls during peak and off-peak times and calling same-system users. For work she would like a faxing facility.

The Carphone Warehouse recommends the Nokia 702 (£79.99) on Orange Talk 60 plan. The handset is light and compact and comes with a lithium battery, with an approximate four-day life. In addition, Alison could buy the Nokia 6110 Data Suite (£99.99) which connects mobiles to a PC and allows for fax/data transmission.

Talk 60 time plan - £29.38 line rental per month - gives 60 minutes of inclusive airtime. The tariff allows you to carry out minutes forward to the next month. Calls between Orange mobiles are always charged at off-peak rate, as low as 5p per minute.

JULIA KAMINSKI works for a publishing company and needs a small, light mobile with a car kit. She wants cheap off-peak and international rates and a mobile that can be used abroad.

The Ericsson 788 (£129.99) on Cellnet, with an Ericsson Personal hands-free unit for £24.49 is recommended. International users should look to GSM (Cellnet/Vodafone) which covers a wide number of countries. Cellnet offers £5/£15/£20 worth of free calls per month, dependent on the tariff, which can be used on international calls.

For in-car use, there are a variety of handsets available from simple portable hands-free adaptors, to fully installed car kits. Right now, Carphone Warehouse is offering up to 50 per cent off to anyone purchasing hands-free equipment.

GLENDIA COOPER, journalist, would use a mobile primarily for national calls during the off-peak period but also occasionally for work. She would like long-lasting stand-by batteries and good coverage.

Recommended is the Nortel 2000 (£79.99) on One 2 One. This offers a compact handset with good battery life - up to 120 hours of standby (the handset also has a built-in hands-free facility).

One 2 One offers a choice of tariffs, including One 2 Weekend (three national weekend calls), One 2 Evening (free national evening calls) and Precept Daytime National (a high-user business tariff with free national daytime calls). It also offers some of the cheapest daytime peak-rate calls as well as free voicemail deposit and retrieval.

FRAN ABRAMS, parliamentary correspondent, needs a mobile to return pager messages but also wants a car kit and good coverage between Suffolk and London, particularly for calling 6pm-8pm.

The advice is an Ericsson GH 688 on Vodafone 20, with a hands-free unit at £24.49. Calls between 6pm-8pm cover both peak and off-peak rates but Vodafone offers the cheapest off-peak at 5p per minute. Vodafone gives 98 per cent of UK coverage so there would be no trouble with coverage between London and Suffolk. (If you give Carphone Warehouse your postcode staff will tell you the best network for your area).

All recommendations and prices are from Carphone Warehouse Ltd. (0800 434 800). Prices are subject to connection and credit clearance.

HOW THE MOBILE PHONE COMPANIES COMPARE

Connection	Cellnet	One 2 One	Orange	Vodafone
Peak hours	£35.00 7 am - 7 pm Mon - Fri No	£35.00 7 am - 7 pm Mon - Fri Yes	£35.25 7 am - 7 pm Mon - Fri No	£35.00 8 am - 7 pm Mon - Fri No
Off-peak allowance?	£2.34 £3.00 Occasional One 2 30 £17.50 £5.00	£11 £10 Double Talk 15 £17.50 30 mins	Included Included Vodafone 20 £17.63 15 mins	£1.99 £2.94 Caller Plus £17.50 20 mins
Standard calls	37/10	30/10	29.4/5	35/5
Peak/Off-peak	37/10	30/12	14.7/5	35/5
Cost to call mobiles	£25.00	£29.00	Orange Talk 60 £29.38 60 mins	Vodafone 60 Plus £25.00 60 mins
Peak/Off-peak	33/10	20/10	23.5/5	32/5
Cost to call mobiles	33/10	12/12	11.75/5	32/5
High user tariff	£75.00	£40.00	Talk 200 £58.75 200	Vodafone 300 £70.00 300
Monthly line rental	£40.00	£40.00	£129.99	£129.99
Inclusive monthly allowance	15/10	15/10	21.15/5	19/5
Cost to call mobiles	15/10	12/12	10.58/5	19/5
Peak/Off-peak	£10.00 call voucher	Up 2 You - 1 Motorola Memphis 30 min call voucher	JustTalk Motorola m201 £15.00 call service	Pay As You Talk Motorola a130
Call cost	50/50	50/50	58/58	credit
Peak/Off-peak	£20.00 & £50.00	£20.00	£17.63 for 30 mins £29.38 for 60 mins £58.75 for 200 mins	60/40* 5/40* £15.00
Cost of further vouchers		£50.00 voucher (gives £65.00 credit)		
Cost of package	£119.99 (plus £20.00 for first voucher gives £40.00 worth of calls)			

Research: Rebecca Wallwork

Handwritten note: 24/11/98 1:50

The rogue on the mantel

Americans loved him once. Now he's the plaything of interior decorators. Add Toby to your home and you will never be short of a talking point. By John Windsor

Toby jugs are probably Britain's most unsexy traditional collectable. Toby is old, overweight, gouty, drinks too much beer and looks garrulous – a 200-year-old version of Alf Garnett. Young British collectors are not taking to Tobies – or other traditional favourites of English ceramics, such as cow creamers or salt-glazed stoneware – as keenly as their fathers and grandfathers did. They would rather invest in Moorcroft, Beswick or Wedgwood pottery, or a daring piece of contemporary art. As a result Tobies are down in price. At auction you can pick up a standard-model quart-size Toby jug with minor damage for only £300-£400, compared to £600-£800 10 years ago. Undamaged ones have kept their value better (as have all mint-condition collectables), but have dropped in value in real terms. You might get one for £1,000-£1,200, compared to £200-£300 a decade ago. That means that unless you love Tobies – could they have a fetishistic appeal? – investing in them must be in the hope that the Americans will rediscover them. They love old English pottery and have shown themselves to be quicker than we are at buying into newly researched fields such as transfer-printed blue and white crockery.

Ten years ago, when the art and antiques market was in an upward price spiral, a New York investment company paid a still-unsurpassed £20,900 at Phillips, the London auctioneers, for an extremely rare Staffordshire Toby jug in the form of a middle-aged fiddler – one of about 15 variants of the standard design with tricorn hat. The fiddler would be lucky to raise half that today. To make money out of such a bold investment you need to sell on to one of the dying breed of very rich collectors who are prepared to pay over the odds to fill gaps in their collec-

tions. There are still a few about. It was an American who paid £3,680 at Sotheby's last month – a big price in today's market – for a rare Toby jug of Martha Gunn, the celebrated Brighton "bathing woman" (she hired out horse-drawn sea-bathing machines and bathed the nobility, including, it was once thought, the infant Prince Regent). The piece had strong colours, only minor damage and its detachable cover was intact. It is furniture dealers and interior decorators, not connoisseur collectors, who are keeping the market for Tobies alive, especially for damaged, run-of-the-mill specimens. Buyers of oak breakfast-room furniture can often be persuaded to add a chipped Toby to their purchases.

The crown of Toby's hat was intended to protect the beer from smuts from candles. Given their bibulous history, there are few without chips

to give the room atmosphere – and a talking point. Well, who was Toby? He was a rotund old Yorkshireman, Henry Elwes, famous for drinking 2,000 gallons of strong stingo beer from his silver tankard, while eating nothing – the sort of feat that the Guinness Book of Records refuses to publish. He was nicknamed Toby Fillopot, and after his death in 1761 the London publisher of popular prints, Carrington Bowles, issued a mezzotint portrait of him. It became a best-seller – as did the Burslem Potter Ralph Wood's

"Toby" jugs based on the portrait. Other potters copied Wood's standard Tobies with foaming tankard, clay pipe resting against the chair and tricorn hat, so convenient as a spout. It is Wood's finely hand-modelled versions, with their translucent brown, green and ochre glazes that are most in demand today.

One of his modelers was the Frenchman John Voyez, a former jeweller who modelled Coade stone and who collaborated in the design of George III's state coach, still used by the Queen. He probably modelled the more vigorous looking Tobies – including Martha Gunn. There is a story that in 1769 Voyez was given 12 strokes of the cat in public and three months imprisonment after Josiah Wedgwood, his employer, laid criminal charges against him. Tobies do give you plenty to talk about.

Wood's son, also Ralph, adopted a less expensive production technique in about 1790, high-firing colours beneath a transparent glaze. Felix Pratt copied it. "Pratt ware" Tobies, in opaque blue, ochre, green and black, manufactured until about 1830, are less valuable than "Wood type". After 1830 Tobies were cheaply mass-produced.

In their day, Wood's Tobies were used by the carousing middle class. Georgian taverns – posher establishments than inns and alehouses – used to bring them out for functions, when they would be filled with strong ale. It was an expensive tipple; one Edinburgh brewer charged 10 guineas a gallon for it. The cup-shaped crown of Toby's hat was intended to protect the beer from smuts from candles and hearths. It is perhaps not surprising, given their bibulous history, that so few of the jugs have survived intact. There are not many Toby hats without chips to the rim.

Unless you intend stockpiling slightly damaged standard Tobies at



Probably the least sexy collectables, yet Sotheby's hopes that Toby jugs, which once fetched high prices at auction, will make a comeback

under £300 each, in the hope that, in time, others will grow to love him, go for the rarer variants. Besides Martha Gunn and the fiddler, there is the sailor, Admiral Lord Howe, the squire, the Welshman, the night watchman, the thin man, the drunken person, the convict, the publican, the old English gentleman, the snuff-taker, the bargeman and the Hearty Good Fellow.

Although these rarities, as a whole, have failed to maintain their value over the past 10 years, they still provoke the occasional saleroom duel. Two years ago at the last big sale of Tobies in London – the Bute collection – three Wood-type squires of about 1785 made £2,900, £2,300 and £1,380. They had been modestly es-

timated, according to condition (they had not a pipe between them), at £1,500-£2,000, £800-£1,200 and £300-£500. The biggest bid was resolute, over the top, and egged on the rest.

How much should you pay for a thin-man Toby these days? Back in 1987 one made around 1775 fetched a whopping £6,050 at Christie's South Kensington. Encouraged, the auctioneers estimated a similar one at £4,000-£5,000 in a sale two years later. It failed to sell. Re-offered in 1993, it made £2,860. In the Bute sale there were four examples, two of 1785 and two of 1790, all knocked about a bit. This time prices bunched between £1,495 and £2,300, apparently depending on condition. Sotheby's auctioneers appear to

have a fixed opinion on how to estimate Martha Gunns in good condition. A Pratt type, although lacking a cover, is estimated £1,000-£1,500 in Sotheby's 4 November sale – the same estimate as in last month's sale at Sotheby's when the price realised for a Wood type was £3,680.

There are 16 cheaply estimated Tobies in Sotheby's Billingshurst 16 September sale (10.30am). A standard model and a black-faced "collier", both Wood types with an excellent provenance, having once been part of one of the finest Toby collections, that of Lord Mackintosh of Halifax, now dispersed, are £300-£500 and £250-£350. Four heavily restored Tobies, including a squire, are £200-£300 the lot. Furniture deal-

ers and interior decorators will try to carry them off cheaply.

The only lot in the sale guaranteed to rise in value in the short term is the Winston Churchill Toby of 1945 – with minor chips, estimated at £700-£900. It is not just a Toby; it is political memorabilia, the latest hot ticket in Sotheby's salerooms.

Sotheby's, 34-35 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-293 5000), Sotheby's Summers Place, Billingshurst, West Sussex (01403-333500), Christie's, 8 King Street, London SW1 (0171-839 9060), Christie's South Kensington, 85 Old Brompton Road, London SW7 (0171-581 7811), Phillips, 101 New Bond Street, London W1 (0171-629 6602).

AFTER TANTALIZING us in February with news of its plans, Nationwide Building Society has officially launched itself as an Internet Service Provider under the brand Nation-wide Internet Services, becoming the first high street-based financial group to do so.

Nationwide's service is being offered on a one-month free trial and £7.50 per month thereafter for unlimited access. Included in the price is up to five E-mail addresses and the option of five mega bytes of Web space so you can create your own pages.

The ISP service is only available to Nationwide members and customers. If you wish to register for the service, the society has set up a free-phone number, 0800-731 6860.

Nationwide is already the market leader in PC and Internet banking services in the UK, with an estimated 35 per cent market share and more than 50,000 users.

If you are going on a holiday there are Websites where you can check on the weather, buy travel tickets and organise accommodation. But what about



ROBIN AMLOT

It is possible to be caught out with foreign currency

money? Some leading personal finance sites quote tourist exchange rates which are updated daily. They offer a reasonable starting point from which to gauge your spending power abroad. Money-world's tourist rates, for example, are updated at 5.30pm, with rates supplied by NatWest.

Internet design group Xenon Laboratories offers a currency table which allows you to type in an amount and then specify the currency it is in and the currency you want it converted to. These rates are

updated by the Bank of Montreal.

Most of the time you may not need a more up-to-the-minute service. However, it is still possible to be caught out with foreign currency.

I remember, last summer, two young American tourists travelling Britain ruefully displaying a walletful of fivers which no shop would accept. They had changed their money at home at what I can only assume was the First National Bank of the Land That Time Forgot.

They had been given a collection of notes bearing the likeness of the Duke of Wellington's notes which had been withdrawn from circulation in November 1991!

There is a way around such a potential dilemma. At least there is for people in the US. This summer, Direct FX launched an online currency exchange over the Web. Direct FX is a privately-held limited company based in London, which operates more than 30 currency exchange bureaux throughout the UK. Its Website is aimed at the US market and can only be

used if you have a credit card with a US billing address.

For security reasons, Direct FX will only mail foreign exchange to the billing address of the credit card which is paying for it. Direct FX offers immediate dollar quotes on 22 currencies and will quote a rate on others by E-mail on request. Once you have entered the amount of each foreign currency you wish to buy, the computer uses the latest exchange rate to calculate your cost in dollars. Enter your credit card information and the cash is delivered by US registered mail, usually within a week. The minimum currency value you may order through Direct FX is \$200 (£124) and the maximum \$2,950. There is a service charge of \$15 and another \$10 for overnight delivery.

Nationwide: www.nationwide.co.uk
Moneyworld Tourist Rates: www.moneyworld.co.uk/rates/currency/tourist.htm
Universal Currency Converter: www.ze.net/currency/
Direct FX: www.foreigncurrency.com

BARGAIN BASEMENT

BANK OF Ireland Mortgages is launching a new mortgage for the self-employed, where borrowers need only place down a 15 per cent deposit. The loans require only a letter from an accountant stating the UK taxable income and is available on multiples of 3.25 times joint income, or 3.75 times the higher income and once the lower income. Call 0800 109010.

YORKSHIRE BANK has improved rates. The increase includes the Premium Plus account, now paying 7.2 per cent gross on deposits over £150,000 and Yorkshire's Tessa, which offers 7.1 per cent on savings above £4,500 and 7.5 per cent above £8,000. Details from branches.

DERBYSHIRE BUILDING Society is launching a one-year Peak Bond, paying 7.3 per cent gross on deposits between £5,000 and £24,999. The rate climbs to 7.5 per cent gross on balances above £25,000. Call 01332 844497.

NATIONAL COUNTRIES Building Society is offering a two-year mortgage with a 2 per cent discount on its current standard variable rate of 8.69 per cent. The maximum advance is 80 per cent of the value of a property.

The society is also offering a two-year loan with a 1.7 per cent discount on the variable rate for remortgages, with no processing or legal fees. Call 01372 744155.

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- (b) Your tea-leaves
- (c) Madame Zara's tarot cards
- (d) Your Virgin One bank statement

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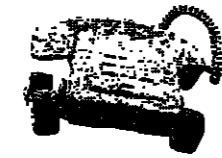
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IS SOMEONE out there listening to me? After shedding 13 per cent, the FT-SE 100 index staged a remarkable recovery, leaping by more than 3 per cent in a single day's trading. It was the largest ever rise in terms of the number of points gained. Why it happened is far from certain. Perhaps all those nervous pension fund managers were busy shovelling money back into the market, although figures from the WM Company this week suggested they were still shedding UK equities. This money must be going into bonds, which may account in some measure for the good performance gifts are delivering at present.

It would be wrong to read too much into this week's bounce, though. City streets are still bereft of traders and it has seldom been easier to find a restaurant table within the Square Mile. Moreover, the big bounce we saw was almost entirely confined to FT-SE stocks and was heavily futures driven. Look at the next 250 shares and the rise is much less. The Small Cap Index was actually down on the day. Where have I heard that before?

Is this the time to bang the drum for smaller companies? Sadly I fear not. It is not just that the increasing globalisation of the investment management business is forcing managers into the most liquid stocks. Many smaller companies are in manufacturing industry, which does seem to be turning down with extremely worrying rapidly. It does not follow that a small company has to be a widget maker, but there are no banks or insurance companies in the Small Cap Index, while any that are involved in telecoms or pharmaceuticals will inevitably be highly speculative.

Still, it is among smaller companies that you are now beginning to find real shareholder value. Where else can you obtain yields of double the average on the Actuaries All Share Index, with the likelihood that dividend levels will be maintained? Unfortunately this may prove to be the only reason for owning shares in smaller companies. Without strong capital performance, they will have to yield sufficient to compensate investors. With the global players still likely to eschew



BRIAN TORA

The risk-reward ratio remains loaded against smaller companies, but they are fun and can yield real value

illiquid stocks, this seems to be all too likely a scenario. The other big call at present must be on when to go back into South-east Asia and emerging markets. Not yet, I fear. The arguments are much the same as those that can be used against smaller companies. Frankly, the big boys really do not want to know. Arguably this has been helping our own market (although you could have fooled me last week) and certainly the illiquidity in markets such as Russia is a mega disincentive. Is there no other place to go than developed markets and the big board stocks?

This will not be the first time that I have sung the praises of smaller companies. They are fun. Trying to spot next year's big winner can be quite stimulating. Still, as anyone who backed the Virgin cosmetics and fashion group in the form of Victory will attest, the risk-reward ratio remains loaded against the smaller-company investor.

I need to return to this again. In the meantime - and prompted by a recent inquiry - I am taking the view that pound-cost averaging is the way in which we should all invest. Take advantage of today's high interest rates while they last to set up a fund that is ultimately destined for shares, and drip your money into the stock market on a steady basis. That way you will be preserved from making silly mistakes. I should have done it years ago.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton Investment Strategy Committee

BEST BORROWING RATES

Telephone	% Rate and period	Min. term	Fee	Incensive
MORTGAGES				
FIXED RATES				
Scotlamb BS	0800 133149	1.5% for 1 year	95%	0.75% Free MFP for rate up to 80%
Lloyds BS	0800 225221	4.64% to 1.70%	75%	225% 1% 6 years 5% of rate
Northern Rock	0845 655 0500	5.85% to 1.14%	95%	1% No MFP for rate up to 85%
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Principality BS	0800 153817	4.65% to 1.110%	90%	£255 No high lending fee
Westminster BS	0800 303010	6.45% for 3 years	90%	£255 No high lending fee
Country BS	0845 655322	6.50% to 30.93%	95%	£255 No MFP for rate up to 90%
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Northern Rock	0845 655 0500	4.50% to 1.11%	95%	7% No MFP for rate up to 85%
Principality BS	0800 153817	5.85% to 31.81%	90%	£255 Free high lending fee MFP
Scotlamb BS	0800 133149	6.15% for 5 years	95%	£255
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Country BS	0845 655322	4.85% to 30.93%	95%	£255 No MFP for rate up to 90%
Principality BS	0800 153817	5.85% to 31.81%	90%	£255
Westminster BS	0800 303010	7.25% for 5 years	95%	£125 Refund of valuation fee
UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS				
Telephone	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs	Web insurance	Without insurance
Northern Rock	0845 421421	9.9% H	£183.14	£185.56
Direct Line	0181 888 9999	12.9% A	£183.75	£188.30
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121125	12.9%	£185.15	£188.30
SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)				
Telephone	APR	Max LTV Advance	Term	
Clydesdale Bank	0800 949024	9.2%	Max	£5K to £15K
Charter Trust	01222 286000	9.9%	100%	6 mths to 25 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121125	11.2%	70%	£2.5K to £100K 3 years to redeem
OVERDRAFTS				
Telephone	Account	% p.a.	APR	% p.a.
Alliance & Leicester	0500 856665	Alliance	0.85%	12.00% 2.30%
Bank of Scotland Direct	0800 404044	Direct cheque	11.0%	26.9%
Westminster BS	0800 303010	Revolving	12.2%	2.10% 28.3%
CREDIT CARDS				
Telephone	Card Type	Rate % p.a.	APR %	Annual Int. free Min. period Income
Capital One Bank	0800 688002	Visa	0.565PM 6.50PM	Nil 54 days
RBS Advance	0800 077776	Visa	0.645PM 7.50PM	Nil 56 days
Northern BS	0800 302111	Visa	0.685PM 6.50PM	Nil 52 days
BUILD CARDS				
Capital One Bank	0800 688 5252	Visa	0.565PM 6.50PM	Nil 54 days £20K
Co-operative Bank	0845 212121	Visa	0.625PM 12.25%	£120 48 days £20K
RBS Advance	0800 077776	Visa	0.645PM 7.50PM	Nil 56 days £20K
STORE CARDS				
Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods	% p.a.	APR
John Lewis	Visa store	1.30%	18.0%	18.0%
Boys	Visa store	1.55%	25.0%	25.0%
Morris & Spencer	01244 561661	1.97%	26.3%	27.8%

* A - Minimum age 22 yrs. Holders of comprehensive motor insurance policy or lender's existing customers
APR - Annualised percentage rate
ASU - Accident, sickness and unemployment insurance
B+C - Buildings and contents insurance
H - Higher rate applies if insurance not arranged
LTV - Loan to value
MFP - Mortgage indemnity premium
N - Introductory rate for a limited period
U - Unemployment insurance

* If completion is before 30.9.98, the rate is 1.1% p.a. from 30.9.98 to 31.8.99. All rates subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01800 476476 20 August 1998

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone number	Account	Min. term	Deposit Rate	Interest
INSTANT ACCESS				
Clydesdale Bank	0800 445265	Savings	Instant	£1 6.75% 0%
Woolwich	0800 222000	Card Save	Instant	£50 6.75% 0%
Spind & Swanton BS	0845 413631	Branch Instant	Instant	£100 6.00% 0%
Lloyds & National BS	0800 225777	Promote Access	Instant	£5,000 7.00% 0%
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS				
Standard Life Bank	0845 555557	Direct Access	Instant	£1 7.50% 0%
C & G	0800 742437	Instant Traveller	Instant	£1 7.50% 0%
Savemy	0800 999995	Direct Savings	Instant	£1 7.50% 0%
SABA (for over 50s)	0800 514515	Pension Savings	Instant	£10,000 7.50% 0%
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS				
Scotlamb BS	01723 500616	Scotlamb 30	30 Day	£1 0.00% 7.00% 0%
Chelsea BS	0800 123881	Post-Net 40	40 Day	£1 0.00% 7.50% 0%
Standard Life Bank	0845 555557	50 Day Notice	50 Day	£1 0.00% 7.50% 0%
Lloyds & National Bank	0800 111200	60 Days 5	60 Day	£1 0.00% 8.00% 0%
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS				
Investment Bank (UK)	0171 203 1650	NCA 5000	Instant	£5,000 6.00% 0%
AMC	0181 447 2040	NCA	Instant	£5,000 6.75% 0%
Habitat	0113 236 6270	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000 5.00% 0%
Chelsea BS	0800 429429	Current PostNet	Instant	£10,000 5.50% 0%
FIXED RATE BONDS				
Norwich & Phoenix	08000 863322	Fixed Rate Bond	6 Month	£5,000 7.50% 0%
Woolwich	Visa bond	Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£500 8.00% 0%
Northern Rock	0845 600 4466	Fixed Rate Bond	31.99	£5,000 7.85% 0%
Nottingham BS	0800 202121	One yr Option Bond	1 Year	£5,000 8.00% 0%
FIRST TESSAS				
Norwich & Phoenix	08000 863322	Post-Net 40	5 Year	£100 8.25% 0%
Principality BS	0122 344155	5 Year	5 Year	£2,500 8.25% 0%
Lloyds BS	0800 225221	5 Year	5 Year	£10,000 8.10% 0%
Yorkshire BS	0800 378636	5 Year	5 Year	£100 8.00% 0%
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS				
Barclays Bank	0800 400100	5 Year	5 Year	£3,000 8.50% 0%
San Bank	01438 745555	5 Year	5 Year	£10,000 8.30% 0%
Norwich & Phoenix	08000 863322	5 Year	5 Year	£10,000 8.25% 0%
Farmore BS	0800 226666	5 Year	5 Year	£3,000 8.25% 0%
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)				
Principality Insurance	0181 207 9007	1 Year	£3,000	5.80% PM Year
ITL London & Edinburgh	01703 520050	2 Year	£3,000	5.70% PM Year
ITL London & Edinburgh	01703 520050	3 Year	£3,000	5.70% PM Year
Western Assurance	0800 830020	4 Year	£10,000	5.65% PM Year
Principality Insurance	0181 207 9007	5 Year	£3,000	5.80% PM Year
OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)				
Brinkley International	01204 681155	Capital Wise Direct	Instant	£10,000 7.60% 0%
Shed & West Ltd	01773 807072	Instant Access	Instant	£50,000 7.50% 0%
First Natl BS Gambia	01481 710400	60 Day Notice	60 Day	£10,000 7.80% 0%
Brinkley International Ltd	01204 681155	90 Day Notice	90 Day	£10,000 7.85% 0%
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)				
Investment Accounts		1 Month	£20	5.00% 0%
		6 Month	£500	5.25% 0%
		1 Year	£2,500	5.70% 0%
		2 Year	£5,000	5.95% 0%
		3 Year	£10,000	6.25% 0%
		4 Year	£25,000	6.45% 0%
		5 Year	£50,000	7.00% 0%
		6 Month	£2,000	7.25% 0%
		1 Year	£5,000	7.50% 0%
		2 Year	£10,000	7.75% 0%
		3 Year	£20,000	7.75% 0%
		4 Year	£30,000	7.75% 0%
		5 Year	£40,000	7.75% 0%
		6 Month	£1,000	6.75% 0%
		1 Year	£2,000	6.75% 0%
		2 Year	£5,000	6.75% 0%
		3 Year	£10,000	6.75% 0%
		4 Year	£15,000	6.75% 0%
		5 Year	£20,000	6.75% 0%

All rates are shown gross and are subject to change without notice. Source: MONEYFACTS 01800 476476 20 August 1998

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Computer programs offer a taxing benefit

How QuickTax, TaxCalc and Tax 98 are helping taxpayers fill in their return forms with ease and confidence. By Janet Swift

WE ARE already well into the second year of self-assessed taxation. Return forms for the 1997-98 tax year - to be filled in by more than eight million taxpayers - were sent out in April and are due back within the next seven months.

The deadline is 30 September if Inland Revenue handle your tax calculations or 31 January if you work it out yourself. Whether you consider last year's self-assessed tax experience a success or a failure depends on your viewpoint. Inland Revenue spokesman Paul Jeffries says: "Substantially, self-assessment in its first year worked well and we were glad that eight out of nine million taxpayers sent in their returns by the 31 January."

Not all the remaining million will come back as some were issued to people who had stopped earning, and forms issued after October 1997 received an extended deadline. The Revenue issued 700,000 penalty notices to those who missed the return deadline, but not all of those concerned were liable for the £100 fine. About 140,000 appeals were lodged in response to the penalty notices. The penalty, however, for not submitting a tax return can't be more than the amount of tax due. But a return must be filed for the penalty to be cancelled.

The responsibility of working out tax liabilities now lies firmly with the taxpayer. Many people who last year filed returns in the second half of the period are determined to do it before September 30 to take advantage of the Inland Revenue's offer to do the calculations for them.

Tony Fava, a chartered accountant in Richmond, North Yorkshire, explains: "There's a



A little help from a friend

Jane Baker

lot of work involved in getting the calculations right. It's better to let the Inland Revenue work them out and then check their figures against the calculations the accountant has made independently. If you do your own calculations the chances of making a mistake can be high - and under the self-assessment scheme not only do you have to complete the return by the deadline, but you also have to get it right, or face a penalty.

The most common reasons for tax returns being "bounced" are oversights: failing to sign or date the return, leaving boxes blank and ticking a box to say a supplement applies, but failing to send in the documentation. There are, however, mistakes that affect the substance of the tax return and these are ones that tax preparation software can help avoid.

The simple way to profit

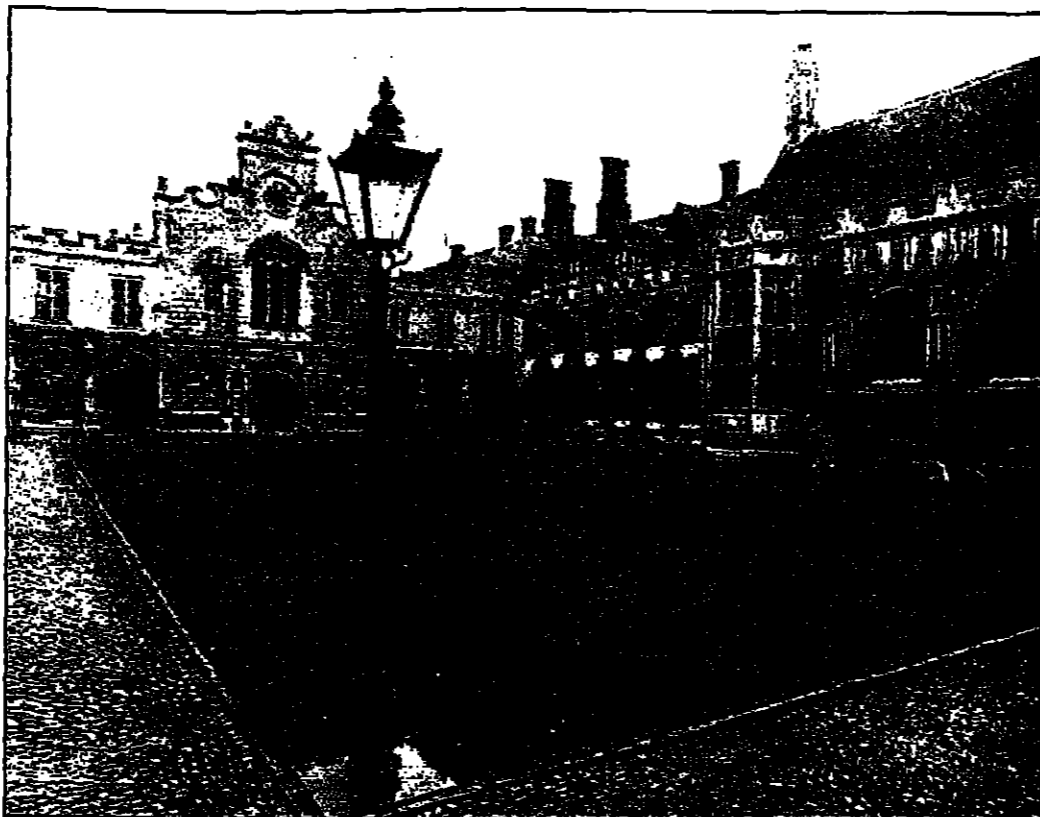


THE JONATHAN DAVIS COLUMN

For decades Cambridge dons bought shares, then left them alone. Two years ago, they meddled

A cautionary tale this week from the land of academia, which highlights the merits of the old-fashioned virtues of simplicity and constancy when it comes to devising investment strategy. The story comes courtesy of the *Investors Chronicle*, which for many years has reported – under the sobriquet Academic Investor – the annual investment performance of an anonymous Cambridge University college. I commented on the college's unusual but highly successful investment strategy in this column a couple of years ago.

The most remarkable feature of the college's approach to planning its investments is its extreme simplicity. As long ago as 1953, years before the cult of the equity had taken hold in this country, the college took the then extremely bold decision to switch all its investment capital out of bonds and invest it in the stock market. This despite the fact that the college relied – and continues to rely – on income from its investments to sustain its (I am quite



Cambridge academics have shown how to make money

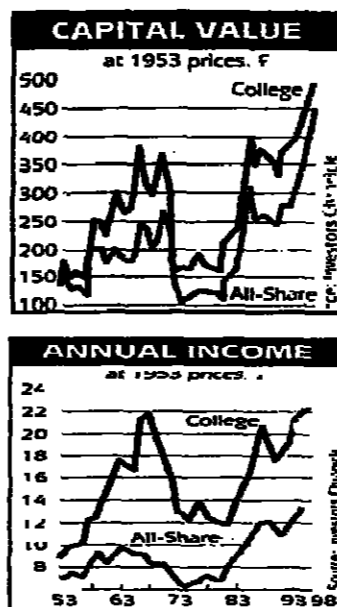
Andrew Buurman

sure) comfortable way of life. Not content with such a radical shift of tack, the college also became one of the first institutions in this country to adopt what we know as a passive investment strategy. It assembled a broadly diversified portfolio of equities and imposed on itself the simple rule that it would only review the portfolio on one given day a year. For the rest of the year, it would simply sit back and leave the market to take its course. It would make no attempt to pick stocks during the year, and even on its one annual review it would try to avoid making any big changes just for the sake of it.

At the heart of this approach was the college's realisation – well

ahead of its time – that there is little point in trying to outperform the market averages without some reason for believing that you can actually achieve such outperformance. The college's time horizon as an investor is long term – at least 100 years, it reckons – and the view of its investment committee is that it has no real basis for thinking it can work out which stocks are going to do best over that time frame. In its own words: "Nobody really has any idea what the future will bring over the next century or two, so an active policy of portfolio management is likely to give worse results than a passive one, because every change of investment incurs dealing costs."

By sticking to its simple policy of minimal changes in its portfolio, the college not only saves on the transaction costs of buying and selling new shares, but also avoids the financial burden of paying management and advisory fees to fund managers or financial advisers – an investment that often fails to yield commensurate rewards. In essence, therefore, the college has for more than 40 years been pursuing a policy of low-cost, passive investment management – the same strategy that, in my view and that of a growing number of others, should logically form the basis of many ordinary investors' strategy. Needless to say, the college has been remarkably well rewarded



for its prescience in avoiding trying to be too clever in its stock market dealings. As the charts show, both its capital and income have fluctuated with the market as a whole, but over the long haul its results have continued both to grow in real terms and to outperform those of the All Share index over the same period. The track record is an excellent advertisement for the merits of simplicity in investment. The college is entitled to put two fingers up to those who, as its chronicler says, prefer to call its approach "simple-minded" rather than "simple".

So why, then, did I describe this as a cautionary tale? Well, said to report, for the last two years the dons at the college have by their own admission made the mistake of abandoning their own best self-denying ordinance and fiddling with their tried and tested policy. Convinced that the market was becoming dangerously overvalued at their annual review last summer, they decided to modify their policy. First they made the historic decision to switch 25 per cent of their portfolio out of

shares and into Treasury bonds, on the grounds that share prices had become "unjustifiably high". Then they compounded the error by using traded options on the main indices to guard against the risk of a significant fall in the market's overall level.

Now it ill behoves me to take issue with these actions, since I have been urging caution about share price valuations and praising the merits of bonds for some time. (The index options are another matter.) Yet I have to record the doleful news that the college's fateful decision has not so far been a conspicuous success. In one sense the college has enjoyed a satisfactory year since its change of tack last year. Its investments have yielded a total return of 14 per cent, comfortably above inflation at 3 per cent – and more than adequate.

The only trouble is that, had the college simply left well alone, and ignored the siren charms of its options, the portfolio's capital value, instead of rising 9.4 per cent, would have risen by 16.6 per cent. (When the market continued to rise, the options lost a significant portion of their value.) If it had stuck to its 100 per cent weighting in equities, rather than moving into bonds, the chances are that it would have matched the 25 per cent gain that anyone investing in a tracker fund could have achieved during the year.

"We are frankly unhappy," concludes a chastened Academic Investor, "about departing from our traditional simple policy. We hope that in future years we will see no reason against reverting to a simple policy which involves no attempt to be clever about predicting movements in market prices." Now they have moved some of their equity holdings into low-cost tracker funds – but are still using a put on the Footsie index to reduce their exposure to equities still further. Will they look smarter next year? It will be interesting to see.

LOOSE CHANGE

BERKELEY ALEXANDER, the insurance firm, is launching a Campus Insurance Policy, which offers three-year's cover during a student's stay at college. The policy includes rental protection – in the event of illness and accident – of up to £1,000. It also has a £10 excess. Three-year policies start from £79. Call 0127-347 7784.

BRITANNIA BUILDING Society is launching a new unsecured personal loan jointly with Capital Bank, charging 12.9 per cent APR on loans more than £10,000. The loan offers a three-month payment holiday on draw-down and qualifies borrowers under the society's Members' Loyalty Bonus scheme. Call 0800-328 1625.

SAVE & PROSPER is offering a free 16-page guide on how to pay for the cost of children's education. The guide also offers a list of sources and phone numbers for more information. Call 0800-829 100.

CHASE DE Vere Mortgage Management, home loan brokers, is offering a five-year capped mortgage of 6.65 per cent, without additional insurances needed. The loan has no redemption penalty after the five-year period and has no mortgage indemnity charge. The maximum advance is 85 per cent of a property's value, with a minimum loan of £100,000. A completion fee of £300 is added to the loan.

TOUCHLINE INSURANCE is issuing policy holders, who take out cover through the firm, with windscreen insurance discs, to be displayed alongside tax discs, acting as visible proof that the vehicle is insured. For details, call 0800-207 800.

THE TAX Team, a chain of independent tax advisers, is launching a website offering tax tips while filling in tax returns, plus a range of tax-related information. It also provides a fee calculator, which issues quotes on how much it would cost for a tax professional to fill the forms in. Visit the site on: www.thetaxteam.co.uk

The place for adventure capital

Hedge funds are high risk but can offer gains in markets that are falling as well as rising. By Iain Morse

WILL HEDGE funds be the next big thing in retail investment? Seen as high-risk, they offer the prospect of gains in markets which are rising, going sideways, or falling.

Investing in a hedge fund is not for the unwary. Alan Pace, director of international prime brokerage at Lehman Bros, the US investment bank, warns: "There is no exact definition of what counts as a hedge fund and investors should do careful research or take qualified advice before investing. Hedge fund managers can embrace different investment strategies. Also, some have been around for years, others have short track records."

This diversity can partly be explained by the way hedge funds first developed. They were based in offshore tax havens, usually constituted as private investment partnerships, in which managers had a lot of their own money.

Today, there is an estimated 3,500 hedge funds around the world, controlling up to £245bn in assets, with most of this coming from the rich. But

providers like Global Asset Management and Fraternity Fund Management have made hedge investments affordable by setting minimum investment levels of between £10,000 and £15,000.

A distinction between hedge funds and most equity investment is the basis on which they calculate returns. Most pooled equity funds are like unit trusts that measure performance relative to a benchmark like the FTSE All Share index. By contrast, hedge fund managers look for an absolute return. As hedge funds are unregulated they can hold any assets the manager wants to buy, and can "sell short" as well as "buy long".

Nicola Meaden, of Tass, a City firm which researches hedge funds, says: "A conventional equity unit trust will 'buy long', buying shares in the hope that they will go up in value. But they are not allowed to 'sell short', against a fall in value."

Selling short depends on a fund manager being able to "borrow" shares for a fee then re-selling them to a third party.



Hedge funds suit those with a gambler's instinct

Once the share price falls, the manager buys the shares back and returns them to the original lender.

This can be high risk, hence the reason why regulated fund managers are not allowed to do it. But it means that hedge funds can make money while a market is falling and rising.

There is no limit hedge funds can borrow against the assets they own. This explains why some of them have failed badly

by managing to lose all of their investor's money.

The dominant styles of hedge fund management are event-driven, global macro, equity hedge and market-neutral. Event-driven funds are common in the US and are now being exported to Europe.

They look for profit in so-called "merger arbitrage" and when a firm tries to takeover another they go short on the creditor's shares, while buying up

their victim's (takeovers cost money, but suggest that the victim's shares are undervalued).

They also may buy "distressed stock" – shares in bankrupt firms that still trade in the hope of making a recovery.

Global macro funds may be active in any asset class, Meaden says: "The Soros funds fall into this category, and typically funds like this will do a lot of research on their chosen asset class. Bets on interest rates and currency values are common."

Equity hedge funds are run by stock pickers – managers who research particular shares or sectors thinking they can beat the market.

Market-neutral funds hold two or more assets whose risk and return values offset each other. "These tend to be quantitative and often make money from identifying price anomalies or inefficiencies in a market," Meaden says.

Managers may try to "equalise" the risk of a market falling or rising, by selling short and buying long. Another small category is "short sellers" which carry portfolios heavily

weighted to going short, or selling against an expected decline in the value of a share category or an index like the FTSE All Share.

Hedge funds are not presently authorised in the UK by the Financial Services Authority, the City's top regulator. They are not permitted to advertise or sell direct to the public. Buyers must find a stockbroker or independent financial adviser who will deal in them, but not all of them do.

Christopher Cottrell, Managing Director of mutual funds at GAM, says this is a pity as "we take the view hedging is about reducing not amplifying risk. We run developed hedge funds as part of a portfolio management service for private clients, if these funds were properly regulated it would help to get rid of cowboys."

The most accessible hedge funds are those with limited means are "fund of funds", like GAM's Diversity Fund. Started in 1989, it controls assets of more than \$1.1bn and has grown by 14.95 per cent per year compound since its launch.

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- (a) No, I don't mind saving at a lower rate
- (b) Whilst borrowing at a higher rate
- (c) **Neither**

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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

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An easy run for your money

What does the price of a sports bra buy you that a normal bra doesn't, asks Karen Falconer

The names Shock Absorber, TriAction, Cross-training and Minimal Bounce sound like something from SAS training but that's part and parcel of the new boldness which surrounds today's sports bra.

Hanging loud and proud from sports-shop carousels and flagging themselves up in every lingerie department from Marks & Spencer to Contessa, these are bras with attitude, bras that have left demure cardboard packaging behind and flout themselves with in-your-face graphics as "the essential piece of sports kit", worn (and advertised) by winners such as Sally Gunnell.

More than that, we are told, with their hi-tech textiles and computer-aided design, these are vital weapons in a modern woman's struggle against saggy breasts and "jogger's nipple".

"A lot of people don't know that the breast has no muscle and can't be built up in the gym. It's only fat and milk ducts, held up by a delicate set of ligaments which stretch with age. Without wearing support you are accelerating the stretching process," says Angela Masella, senior brand manager at Berlei, maker of the Shock Absorber.

Alan Bergman, managing director of Dans-ez and a former professional dancer, concurs: it was noticing his girlfriend clasp her breasts with her hands while jogging that led him to design and patent his Minimal Bounce Bra, a sort of crop top which pulls the breast tight and close to the body.

"It's a question of physics," he says. "The breast needs to be brought as close as is comfortable to the chest wall. A great sports bra needs to be initially flat without using cups or darts. If you cupped your breast in your hand and jumped up and down, it would be far more comfortable than if you had put your hand under your breast. For active sports, it's best to err on the small size even though it may feel like a cultural shock to the breasts the first time."

Any woman who works out or plays sports is painfully aware of the problem. And sports bras, with their robust vocabulary of pressure points, racing backs, broad straps, restricted stretch, breathable fabrics and Velcro fastenings, may be the perfect solution for sporty women. With their image of added value for money and technical finesse, they are also a lucrative new market for the manufacturers that will be lining the aisles of this week's Harrogate Lingerie Show, which itself launched a Best Sports Bra award last year.

But while there's obviously a need to be met, every company's solution seems to be different. "Our philosophy is that you shouldn't wear underwired bras when doing sports, because the wire can sit on the breast tissue when you're doing, say, an aerobic stretch. The big challenge is to give the support and shape women get from underwires without using them. We use slings (from the armpit to under the cup) and cradles (acting as a frame underneath)" says Ms Masella about the Berlei Shock Absorber range of 10 sports bras in cup sizes ranging from AA to G, some straight bras and other crop tops with matching briefs. Its bras, from around £20 plus (cup



Put your bra through its paces with a workout at the gym and see if it is really such a high price to pay for a bit of much-needed support

sizes A to F), are graded in "impact levels" 1 to 4, and the back of each box shows you what your impact requirements are according to your chosen activity and cup size.

Triumph, too, sticks to seam-free cups and no underwiring in its range of five TriAction bras, using a broad under-bust band for control and uplift, and Velcro rather than hook fastenings. "Our sports bras are graded shallower than normal bras so that they fit snugly. But we create them so the bust is allowed

to move - we don't clamp them - to avoid any possible pressure points."

Marks & Spencer (£18.99) hedges its bets on its new range of sports bras which come with and without underwiring, and with a choice of back or front fastenings. "We've tried to satisfy two sports consumers," says its spokesperson. "One who wears a sports bra under T-shirts and leggings; the other more extrovert, confident about her body, who just wears her crop top and briefs."

Even Fila have entered the fray with underwear "for women who want to look like they're sporty and for women who are" - not to mention those who like to sport a cool brand name when out clubbing. But are sports bras just the latest fad, or are there real benefits to justify the not insignificant cost? Research conducted for Berlei by Heriot Watt University found that breast movement was reduced by 56 per cent when wearing a Shock Absorber bra, against 38 per cent

with an ordinary bra, with even 34As showing a need for support.

June Kenton is the owner of the Knightsbridge bra specialists Rigby and Peller. Although the shop stocks sports bras by both Berlei and Triumph she is unequivocal in her advice to wear what suits you, as long as it's the right size. "We are always being told to wear sports bras, but the really important thing is to wear a bra that fits. Bigger women should be wearing an under-wired bra. I'm a 36C

and work out three times a week in the gym, and find the bras that just stretch over me are not supportive enough; and can be extremely uncomfortable and hot. If you're doing aerobics you can be in a strait-jacket and still bounce up and down because there's nothing holding you underneath."

At the end of the day, there's nothing else for it: check you've got the right-size bra, then jump up and down in the

GOOD THING



THIS BRIGHT and breezy bubble-bath will put cheer into any bathroom. It costs £3.99 for 600ml from Grosvenor of London and the bottles are available in three funky colours - "friends" blue, "groovy chick" pink and "happy" green. Buy it from John Lewis, House of Fraser, Debenhams or Safeway, or telephone 0171-470 1900 for your local stockist. If the packaging looks familiar, it is a new addition to the "Bang on the Door" stationery and cards.

MAD THING



GET YOUR kids organised - or at least try to - with an electronic personal organiser from Oregon Scientific. These new products come in bright blue and yellow and range from £9.99 for a basic organiser to £24.99 for one that includes an FM radio, date and time, address book, calculator, memo and schedule. Available from all major retailers. (tel: 0800 214 849 for nearest stockist).

SHOP TALK



FEED YOUR mind and body at the Blake Head Bookshop and Vegetarian Café in York. Set among the old buildings and historical streets of the city, the excellent vegetarian café is the place to retreat to with a stack of newly purchased books. While away the afternoon in literary heaven or return to the shop to pick up a bargain. All the books are at reduced prices so it's also a good place to find last-minute presents. Or dash across the road to the Blake Head Record Shop to purchase some vinyl.

Blake Head Bookshop and Café (01904 623 767) is at 104 Micklegate, York, and opens from Mon-Sun, between 9am and 5.45pm (café open from 9.30am-5.30pm Mon-Sat and 10am-5.30pm on Sundays)

Words: Helena King
Picture: Peter Byrne/Guzelian

SIX OF THE BEST

SPORTS BRAS



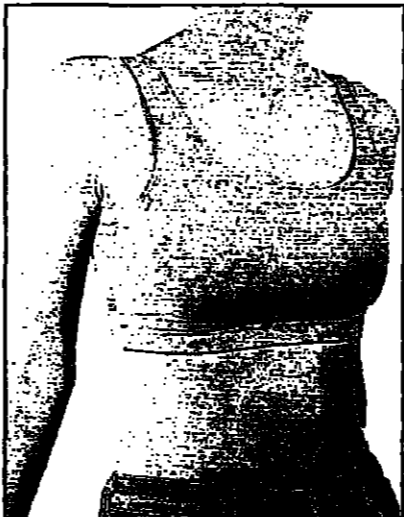
The Olympic:



The sturdy:



The sensible:



The colourful:



The Shocking:



The fashionable:

The TriAction 5002 Sports Bra costs £21 from Triumph (01793 720232) and, although not suitable for very strenuous activity, which requires more support it is apparently comfortable enough to be the favourite bra of the 1996 British Olympic team. Triumph is launching the new TriAction 4003 in February so remember to keep an eye out for that.

Berlei's (01525 859 769 for stockists) B115 Sport Top costs £30, and is part of the Shock Absorber range which was launched in 1995 and is endorsed by the British athlete Sally Gunnell. This top is new out and will be available in the shops this autumn. It feels a bit like wearing a tank but it incorporates a special fabric to keep you cool and lycra to improve the fit.

It comes as no surprise that the trusty lingerie favourites, Marks & Spencer (0171 935 4422 for stockists) should get in on the sports bra act and its White Sports Bra is what you'd expect from the British underwear favourites. It costs £18 and is a simple, no-nonsense design with good support and no unnecessary - and unwanted - frills.

The Minimal Bounce Bra, £20.49, from Dans-ez (01843 866300 for stockists) does exactly what the name suggests. Once you've scooped yourself in, there's very little room for movement and this bra has kept me supported through everything from step aerobics to racing at Women's Henley. It may, however, be slightly uncomfortable for the very well-endowed.

The B102 Bra costs £21 from Berlei (01525 859 769 for stockists) and is part of the Shock Absorber range that has been awarded "Best Sports Collection" award for the last two years by the lingerie industry. One of the best things about the range is that the bras are all categorized into impact levels I - IV, according to bust size and the relevant sport.

If you are the kind of person who looks at the label to see the name of the manufacturer before you even consider putting it next to your skin, then the Freebody bra by Fila (01475 504040 for stockists), could be the sports bra for you. It costs £20 and cleverly combines good support with enough style to be worn on its own. Pictures: Neville Elder

Ch 11/20/98

Are the new generation of bookshop megastores worth all the hype? Charlotte Packer reads between the lines



Crossing the literary borders

Not content to rest on their laurels as providers of the nation's favourite leisure activity, retailers are forever searching for new and exciting ways to keep us shopping. Canny store managers saw that by offering their customers rest, relaxation and decent food they'd both keep them on the job and also keep them from straying into rival stores.

Bookshops were among the first to adopt American-style cafes and cappuccino bars which not only added to their ambience but also swelled their coffers. But these days competition is fierce: not only does every other book shop come with a cafe attached, but they're fighting a price war too. Good coffee alone is no longer enough.

Borders Books & Music, a vast four-storey bookshop on London's Oxford Street, is a case in point. In addition to the books (150,000 different titles) there is, of course, a cafe, and there are CDs and tapes (around 50,000 in stock), and videos (choose from over 5,000); naturally there are magazines and newspapers (2,000 different titles) and stationery to Paperchase concession) - nothing new in that lot, apart from the quantities. Where it really differs from its fellow book sellers is in entertainment. Most bookshops have the odd signing or launch event, but at Borders there is a daily happening of some form or another. On Fridays it's jazz, and on Saturday mornings kids' story telling, and this Saturday, if you hurry, you'll catch Stephen King making his first public appearance (signing books, not scaring children), in the UK for 25 years. This

commitment to vast stocks, opening hours of 8am-11pm and the variety of in-store activities sounds promising.

And, when you walk into the cathedral-like space which is the store's ground floor, you can't help but be impressed. But somehow the rest of the experience fails to live up to the promise of the PR puff, neither does all that space, light and height. Once you step off the escalator on the second floor it all feels pretty soulless and more like being stuck in a modern university library doing late-night cramming, or a bleak airport terminal: the ceiling is low, the carpet jazzy, and the lighting too harsh.

I was hoping for something more intimate and a little less corporate. But really Borders is just another bookshop; it's only the sales pitch which marks it out from its competitors. The pre-launch hype suggested that this would be a truly unique shopping experience, much was made of its American roots, and its fun and relaxed atmosphere, people would use Borders for more than books and music, they would choose to meet up for a drink and a chat too. But personally I'd rather meet up with someone at an airport departure lounge (with the promise of an exotic beach only hours away), than a place that simply feels like one.

There is nothing new at Borders Books & Music, bar the scale, and ultimately scale is not in its favour. Bookshops are at their best when they are intimate, when staff have the time, knowledge and inclination to help individual customers. And nowhere is this better illustrated than on Bleinheim Crescent in west London, where three of the UK's best specialist book shops have chosen to open.

Although to compare a specialist outlet's stock with that of a monster-size superstore like Borders would be unfair, a comparison of the shopping experience (on which the latter is trading hard), is quite legitimate. And the west London triumvirate come out the clear winners. Okay, so it may not be so convenient to trek out to Ladbroke Grove, and perhaps you only want the latest blockbuster, but that said, shopping and browsing in these shops is real pleasure.

The Travel Book Shop was the first to arrive, back in 1979, followed four years later by Books for Cooks, and finally in 1996 Garden Books. All three are cosy, slightly cramped and each is very much a labour of love for its owners. In addition to these charms, all offer unrivalled selections of titles within their specialisation, and most important of all, they run world wide mail order services.

In Books for Cooks there is a large squashy sofa for browsers to sink into, and an open-plan kitchen at the back where recipe books are put through their paces - this spawned a restaurant and many customers, overcome by the delicious aromas, stay for lunch or tea. At The Travel Book

Shop the floor is covered with worn kilims; and at Garden Books you will find pot plants and cups of herbal tea. In each case you feel that perhaps you have wandered into a personal library in someone's house, which in some ways you have because as well as current publications all three shops stock a good second hand selection of well-thumbed out of print titles.

In addition to the ambience, the main appeal of the trio of shops on Bleinheim Crescent is the knowledge and enthusiasm of the staff. At The Travel Book Shop, which not only holds all the current guides the staff know exactly which are the best and most up to date. If you are heading off on a foreign adventure then you can do no better than start your journey here.

"If someone came in saying they were planning to go to India, and they hadn't been before," says manager, Sean Swallow, "I'd try to persuade them to read VS Naipal's 'India: A Million Mutinies Now', in addition to the standard guides. If it was Japan I'd suggest 'The Lonely Planet Guide' because it's the most up to date, and 'The Silent Cry' by Kenzaburo Oe. We have lots of travel-related fiction which, while probably there in a larger book shop,

won't be in the travel section so you wouldn't necessarily notice it."

Although used by professional cooks and cookery writers, there is no snobbery at Books for Cooks, and you can expect to hear the truth about the latest culinary block-busters whether it's *Delia or The River Cafe*. If you simply need advice on boiling an egg, they'll locate the most suitable title (*How to Boil an Egg* by Jan Arkless); and just as they can be relied upon to have the most obscure cookery titles such as *Home Smoking & Curing* by Keith Eriandson, they will also have all the kitchen classics.

Over at Garden Books, owner Valerie Scriven has taken the definition of gardens and gardening to the limits, and books are arranged in sections as diverse as water gardening, literature inspired by nature, plants for problem places, garden history, bonsai and topiary, perfume and the history of perfume making, and there is even a business title 'Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds' by Charles Mackay, which is the only publication currently in print that covers Tulipmania. Customers include jewellery designers looking for inspiration

from botanical illustrations and architects drawn by the impressive section devoted to public spaces and environmental design. Scientists, professional garden designers and keen enthusiasts also beat a path to Valerie's door. And there are the usual book signings and launches (Stephen Woodham's book *Flower Power* in mid-September), but better still there are exotic garden tours run by Valerie's tour company, East of Suez, which organises visits to Mughal gardens in India and natural history tours in Vietnam. So, if you must have a lifestyle experience with your hunt for reading matter, make the effort and head west or, if you're not based in London give them a call.

Borders Books & Music, 203 Oxford Street London W1 (0171 292 1600) The next store opens in Brighton on 4th September.
The Travel Book Shop, 13-15 Bleinheim Crescent, London W11 2EE (0171 229 5260) www.thetravelbookshop.co.uk; Books for Cooks, 4 Bleinheim Crescent, London W11 (0171 2211992) e-mail: info@booksforcooks.com; Garden Books, 11 Bleinheim Crescent, London W11 2EE (0171 792 0777)

Browsing in Books for Cooks, above, is a much more pleasurable experience than the impersonality of Borders, above left

Neville Elder

CHECK IT OUT DESIGNER SHOPPING ON THE INTERNET

Turn on, tune in and shell out

WHAT ARE you to do when you must have a handbag to co-ordinate with your outfit, but the thought of having to jostle your way to the shops among the crowds is just unbearable? If you have no personal style assistant and find catalogue purchases a no-no, there is a new option to help you out.

A website launched in May this year aims to offer designer goods throughout the world, all delivered at no extra charge and within two to ten days. British fashion designers have gone technological and decided to sell their wares on the Internet, so now there really is no excuse for not having a thing to wear. Presumably, the idea is that even the most cosmopolitan of shoppers can take time out from a busy schedule to get the latest designer goods, and no one will even know that you are not working, because you can place your order from behind the safety of a computer screen.

The website calls itself The Best of British and it certainly has an impressive menu of designers. Photographs of Lulu Guinness's handbags, Neisha Crossland's scarves, Dinny Hall's jewellery, Bill Amberg's leather goods, Bouchon's bottle-stoppers and Babette Wasser-

man's cufflinks are all accompanied by pictures of the designers themselves and, when you delve further in, a résumé of each designer appears (perhaps used as salesmen should try this ploy).

We are told that all Dinny Hall's pieces are hand-made in her Soho studio and "come attractively packaged in Dinny Hall boxes". Neisha Crossland, we learn, has been making scarves since 1994, having originally been inspired by the displays of 18th-century brocades in the Victoria and Albert Museum. Bill Amberg's résumé is somewhat more abrupt: "Bill was born in Northamptonshire, the home of the English leather trade."

The screen layout is simple but attractive, with an authoritative Union Jack flying proud at the top of the page and an easy-to-use shopping system. All the products are illustrated to help you make your choice, and the site somehow manages to create just the right balance between being overly twee and aggressively cool.

The items for sale at the site are usually changed each week and, as well as the six designers, there is a definite catering for the "stay-at-home" tourist market with numerous non-designer buys.



Designer Dinny Hall

Many of the site's customers are American and gift baskets stuffed with Scottish smoked salmon, port, cheese and confectionery, an interesting selection of 20th-century prints, handkerchiefs and Antoni and Alison T-shirts - currently the most popular items - are all catering to a foreign idea of fashionable Britain. A little further in, the "promotion" screen gives details of a £36 (£52.50) for those ordering from the US) goody box filled with "traditional" British culinary favourites such as, er, dry-roasted peanuts. Baxter's



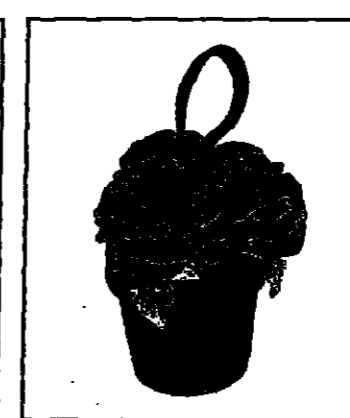
Bill Amberg's extraordinary labyrinth basket

cream of tomato soup and Jacob's Crackers. With products such as these, it is easy to imagine homesick expats as well as Anglophiles across the globe hooking up online to order their monthly rations of nostalgic British tucker.

Bendicks mints are the first items on the page and, tellingly, the prices are in US dollars first, with pounds in brackets. Another sign of the site's catering to the international tourist market is the "Britain-in-miniature" site at the bottom of the page. Here you can find out the very

latest cricket news, catch up on British weather, check on train timetables and holiday cottages throughout the land, or find the essential news page that informs you: "Prince Raises Money For Charity Playing Polo".

Fortunately, the work of the six main designers is clearly accessible and good value. The cheapest designer item (each designer has between six and nine products on sale) is a silver-plated champagne dropper from Bouchon, for £21. The most expensive item is a sleek Bill



Handbag by Lulu Guinness

Amberg rocket bag at £410, but there are plenty of mid-price items. Babette Wasserman's cufflinks are all £35 or £40 and Dinny Hall's jewellery starts at £39 for a pair of silver hoops. My favourite has to be the Bill Amberg "labyrinth" basket which looks just like a corset; it costs £90 (£140).

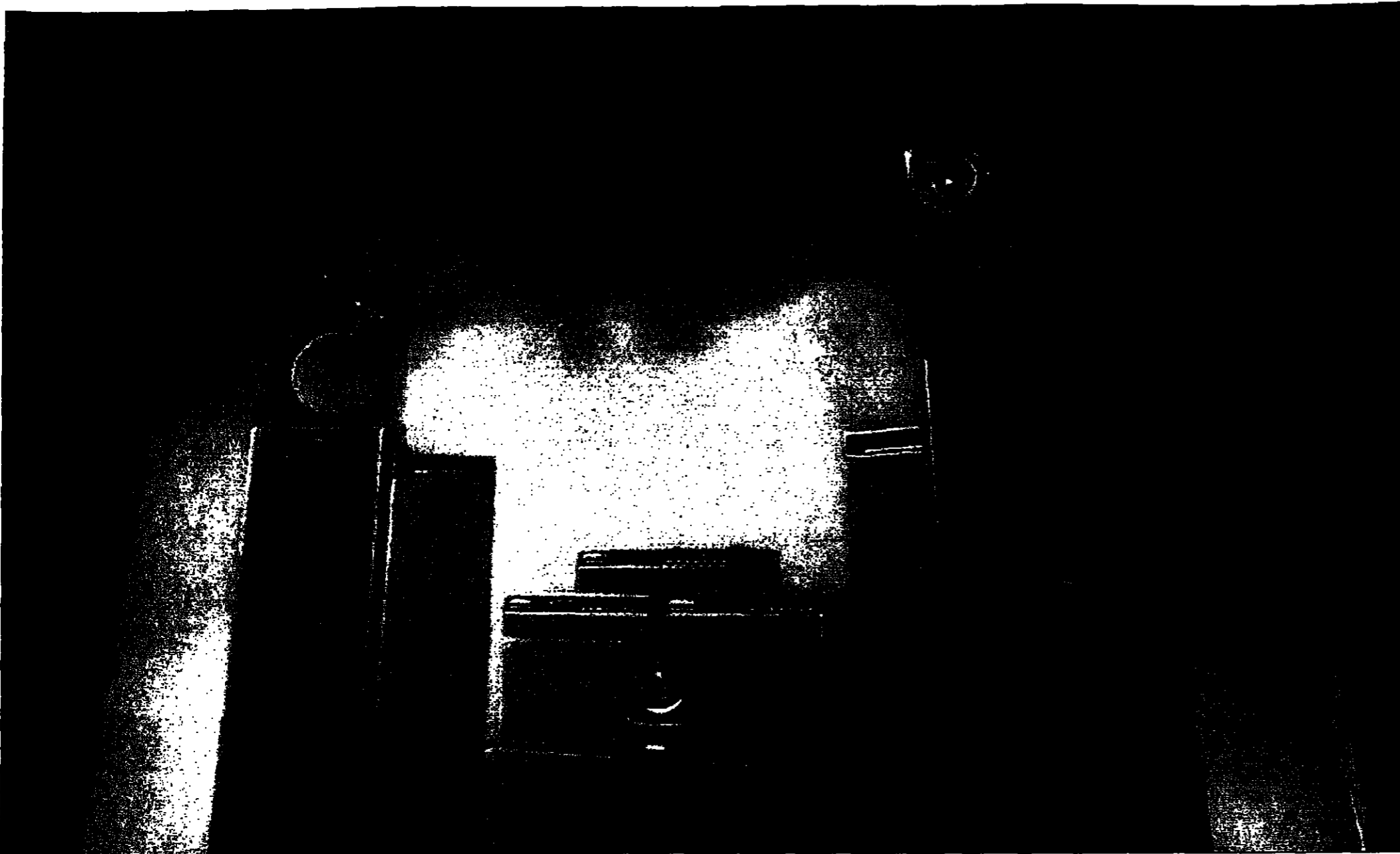
The reason why the goods are so reasonably priced is straightforward. With none of the overheads that a shop has to cover, overall costs are lower and retail prices reflect that. The Antoni and Alison T-shirts

cost only £24.99 at The Best of British, whereas boutiques in London are selling the same T-shirts for £36.50.

With the only obvious drawback to the site being the relative lack of clothes on the list (apparently people do not like to buy clothes without first trying them on), it is small wonder that on an average day 1,100 people visit "the shop". But is this really as much fun as physically walking into a shop and caressing a Neisha Crossland scarf, sniffing a Bill Amberg design or posing in a mirror with a glitzy Lulu Guinness handbag?

If shopping via a website such as this is the best you can do, then fine - and no doubt for many it will take a lot of the pain out of Christmas shopping. But next time I save up enough money to choose myself a little designer number, I know that I will be making the absolute most out of the experience, and walking confidently through the doors of a shop that has elegant display rails, enormous mirrors, discrete price tags, glass counters and real, live sales assistants.

The website can be found at <http://www.thebestofbritish.com>
RHIANNON BATTEN



The music sounds better with you... Pavarotti's Nessun Dorma heard through Meridian's Digital Theatre will make you shrink down into the cushions of your sofa

I WANT TO OWN ... A £30,000 STEREO

As high-fi as you will ever go

BILL DRUMMOND, who memorably scored a number one hit about Dr Who's Tardis in 1988, once claimed that a pop record needed to sound good on a Dansette if it ever stood a chance of being successful. The former *Timelord* and *KLF* frontman is clearly certifiable. Not only would a sane man not be interested in appreciating the finer qualities of Billie's "Because We Want To" on an antiquated mono record player, they would not burn a million quid on a remote Scottish island in the name of art. Not unless they had already invested stacks of cash in audio-visual hardware, anyway.

If hi-fidelity means no more to you than a Nick Hornby paperback, then you would

be forgiven for thinking bargain bin, city-centre Meccas stocked to the rafters with gimmicky micro systems and mini-disc players are the be all and end all of audio technology. Far from it: real hi-fi dealerships are more like exclusive gentlemen's clubs, the majority of which are gathered into the British Audio Dealers Association (0171-226 4044, <http://www.bada.co.uk> for your nearest dealer). Bada promises expert, impartial advice, financial safeguards on deposits and a free extended two-year guarantee on all hi-fi and home cinema separates. It also pledges to stock only goods of quality, performance and value, which, if you have a patriotic bent you will be pleased to know, features British equipment more prominently than Japanese.

If you want the highest priced hi-fi, then there is no better place to start than Grams Hi-Fi (0171-226 5500 <http://www.grams.co.uk>). Ranked by *High Fidelity* magazine among the world's top five hi-fi shops in 1990, Grams is a designer labyrinth inside a nondescript warehouse near Islington's scruffy New North Road. You can expect to spend anything from £800 for a basic CD/amplifier/speakers system to £150,000 for a state-of-the-art audio-visual entertainment package.

Daniel Haikin of Grams reckons that £1,000 will buy you a good system, and £5,000 an extremely good one. But if you want the most technologically advanced hi-fi on the market you will have to shell out the price of a lock-up garage in

Knightsbridge for a system that is not only ugly, but does not even include a CD player, a cassette deck or a record player.

To call Meridian's (01480 52144 <http://www.meridian-audio.com>) Digital Theatre a stereo would be an injustice. Meridian is highly unusual in its approach. Instead of sending fragile analogue signals down two-inch-thick power lines to its speakers, its bulky PC-styled mother unit sends pure digital signals through discreet cables to "intelligent" speakers, which have four internal amplifiers and six drives apiece.

Like the original stereo system developed for cinema in the Twenties, the Meridian system also has a central speaker unit that focuses on vocals, and an

additional two sit behind the listener. They lend an astonishingly lifelike ambience to an already phenomenal sound.

Although it is possible to run record players, CD players etc through the processor, the ultimate software to run on the Meridian is an audio Digital Versatile Disc (DVD). This looks like a CD but has twice as accurate audio quality and holds 25 times more information. The major drawback is that there are currently only four DVD audio-discs available.

To appreciate the capabilities of Meridian's DVD player to the full, though, you need to throw in another £7,000 for a liquid crystal projector and a drop-down screen. Instantly your room is a small-screen cinema, only better: if the music sounds uncannily lifelike on its own, when combined with visuals it is phenomenal.

Pavarotti's ubiquitous take on "Nessun Dorma" was like a front-row seat but without the saliva: the climax was so intimidating that I physically shrank down in the sofa. The demonstration's climax was the balletic, kung-fu-slaying, alien opera scene from *The Fifth Element*.

At this point the rear speakers kick in with the special effects in the same way as real cinema speakers - one of the processor's myriad functions is proper Dolby Digital rather than the more common but cruder Dolby Pro-Logic.

If money is no object, then you can top off your system with a Creston touch-screen, a mini-computer remote with a

touch-sensitive screen that allows macro programming so that you can do a series of commands across a variety of different remotes from the touch of one button.

And the downside? Other than being a bit highly strung (it does not like troublesome CDs) and a little too accurate in its representation of sound, the worst thing about listening to this system is that you cannot return your ears. I had assumed my standard thirtysomething £600 system to be the aural equivalent of Paul Smith menswear, discreetly sophisticated and cool without being overly flash. Now my stereo seems more like a Mr Byrnie knock-down than a designer classic.

SHAUN PHILLIPS

THE BILL

The whole set-up:

Meridian 861 Surround Pro £8,000 (processor); Meridian DSP6000 Digital Loudspeakers £9,400 (main front speakers); Meridian DSP5000c Centre Black £1,750 (central speaker); Meridian DSP5000 Black £2,295 (rear speakers); Meridian 586.2 DVD Player £2,295; Sony VPS-W400 LCD Projector £5,500; Electric Drop-Down Screen £1,250

Total cost: £31,490

BUDGET BUYS

IF YOU haven't got a spare 31 thou' knocking around, hold your head up high for:

• Under £1,000: with an Arcam Alpha 7 CD player, Arcam Alpha 7R amplifier, B&W 302 speakers and QED QNECT1 cable

• Under £5,000: with a NAIM CD 3.5, NAIM NAC 102 pre-amplifier, NAIM NAP 180 power amplifier and Shalinian Compass speakers.

HI-FI JARGON

DON'T KNOW your woofers from your tweeters? Get to grips with:

- **Dolby:** noise reduction system to cut down on background hiss
- **Woofer:** Part of the speaker where the bass sounds emanate
- **Tweeter:** Part of the speaker where the treble sounds emanate
- **DVD:** Looks like a CD but is 25 times more powerful
- **Toroidal transformer:** If someone uses terminology like this, make your excuses and leave.

THE ULTIMATE CHINESE TAKEAWAY KIT

Forget hastily-munched late-night takeaways and instead spend some energy enjoying your Chinese takeaway food in style. Swap feeling guilty for not preparing the food yourself by creating the perfect takeaway atmosphere at home by lighting some Chinese Joss sticks, £2.23 per box, from the Edgeware branch of Wing Yip (0181 450 0422) or its stores in Croydon, Birmingham and Manchester.

Palmweave placemats, £4 each from Habitat (0645 334433 for enquiries), will keep your table pristine while you slurp away. An additional rolling mat costs £2.95 from Habitat (0645 334433 for enquiries) and the most essential item - chopsticks, cost £2.95 from Habitat (0645 334433 for enquiries). Leaf-shaped chopstick rests are £6 for six from Wing Yip (0181 450 0422).

Dim the lights and hang up tealight-filled lanterns instead. Chinatowns around the country are good places to stock up on cheap Chinese equipment and decorations and this lantern costs 50p from the Newport Supermarket (0171 437 2266) in London's Chinatown. They come in a range of colours and sizes so there's no excuse not to buy a whole bundle.

No 'Chinese' style table would be the same without bamboo. This sturdy bamboo tray costs, £55 from Emily Readett-Bayley (0171 231 3939 for catalogue) and is perfect for carrying necessary bottles of Tsing Tao beer, 80p each, from Wing Yip. And, if your sweet and sour prawns are a little on the bland side, a small bottle of chilli oil, 90p from Wing Yip, is just the thing for spicing them up.

Another practical item that will come in handy for almost any occasion on your home entertaining calendar is this large circular tray. It costs a very reasonable £15 from Habitat (0645 334433 for enquiries) and is shown here supporting a traditional rice pattern teapot, £2.20, and three matching rice pattern cups, 40p each, all from Wing Yip (0181 450 0422).

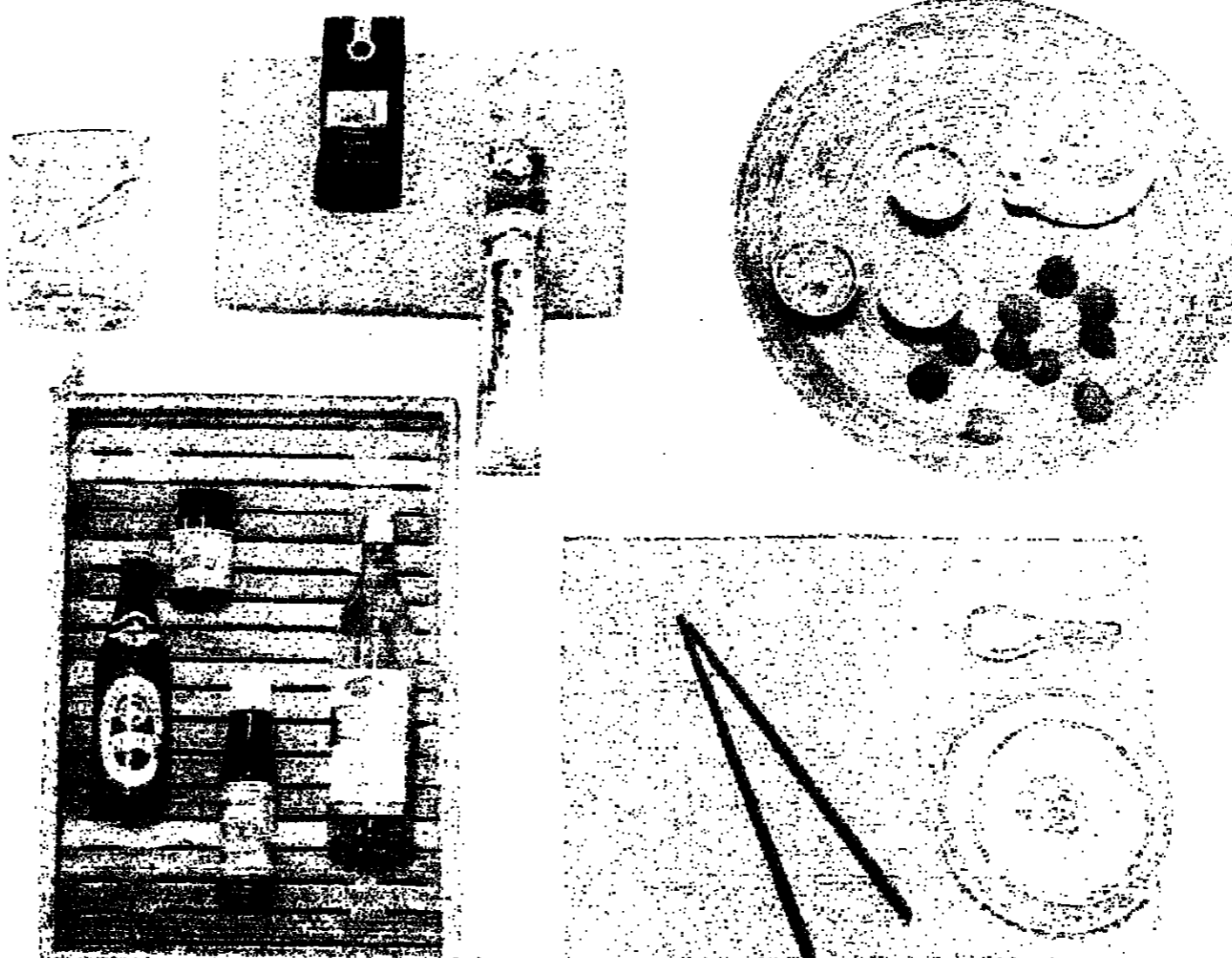
When the Tsing Tao beer starts to kick in, turn to tea instead and, as an accompaniment here, the order of the day is definitely Jasmine. Most Chinese supermarkets will have an astonishing selection of Jasmine tea to choose from but it is also available in many British high street shops. This packet costs £2.50 from Whitard of Chelsea (0800 525092).

Apart, possibly, from fish and chips scooped hungrily out of newspaper wrappings, food never seems to taste as good unless it's eaten from the right kind of crockery. For a Chinese meal that means a rice pattern bowl, £1.28, a rice pattern side plate, £1.48, and, as an emergency escape option from your chopsticks, a rice pattern spoon, 40p. All from Wing Yip (0181 450 0422).

A bottle of light soy sauce is without doubt the must-have of the Chinese condiments and it's worth getting an authentic brand. This one costs 40p from Wing Yip (0181 450 0422). Prepare for the end of the meal by adding a bottle of sweet plum wine, £3.23 from Wing Yip (0181 450 0422), to your tray. It will wash down the remnants of the Jasmine tea perfectly.

Most people find that a takeaway Chinese meal is enormous. But, if you can find an empty space, rip open a small (115g) bag of lychees, 90p until 30 August and then £1.39 from Sainsbury (0800 636262). The soft, scented, deliciously gooey fruit in the spiky red shell is worth the squeeze.

Photographs by Neville Elder



IF I WIN THE LOTTERY TONIGHT...

LIZ BARCLAY
RADIO PRESENTER



"I LOVE antique furniture so I'd treat myself to some good pieces. I have no pictures, only prints, so I'd commission some - including views of Northern Ireland where I grew up - from a friend who's a great painter in watercolour and acrylic. If we're talking serious money, I'd buy my own radio station to broadcast all those ideas I've had that network controllers haven't agreed were wonderful.

I'd lavish treats on friends and family, especially my parents in Antrim and my sisters in Frankfurt and Glasgow. But I seem to be surrounded by the least materialistic bunch of people you could imagine so it might be holidays, trips to the theatre and concerts, and lots of good food and drink. My mother enjoys musicals and ballet so I'd love to have her here in London from time to time to see musicals. Coming up to Christmas she'd love to see the Christmas productions. She and my father also love Irish folk music, and so *Lord of the Dance* and *Riverdance* would be high on the list.

I'd move from Richmond to a flat overlooking or near a park in central London. Regent's Park or Hyde Park would be ideal. I'd also buy a cottage in Ireland, somewhere overlooking the sea. I love London so I'd definitely not move away, but nowhere can ever take the place of the country of your birth and Ireland has the "softest" and greenest scenery in the world - it's the place I always feel homesick for, wherever I am in the world. I had never lived more than 15 miles from the sea until I lived in London. It's my calming influence in moments of stress.

I'd keep on working. I'm unbearable without work and I really enjoy *You and Yours*, yet I might work less and go back to voluntary work. The Citizens Advice Bureau service where I used to work still attracts me.

As for travel, I've always had a hankering for the style of the Orient Express. Apparently there is a train trip that goes from Peking to Moscow, taking 42 days or so, stopping in lots of exotic places.

I'd keep on doing the lottery. The Irish are superstitious about most things but I never really think about any numbers as being particularly lucky. I have been told 1 and 7 are the important ones."

Liz Barclay presents *You and Yours* on BBC Radio 4, Monday to Thursday at 12pm, and writes for *Moneywise* magazine. She was speaking to Diana Gregory

July 11:50

Truly a super superbike

The new Yamaha is building a two-wheeled dynasty. By Roland Brown

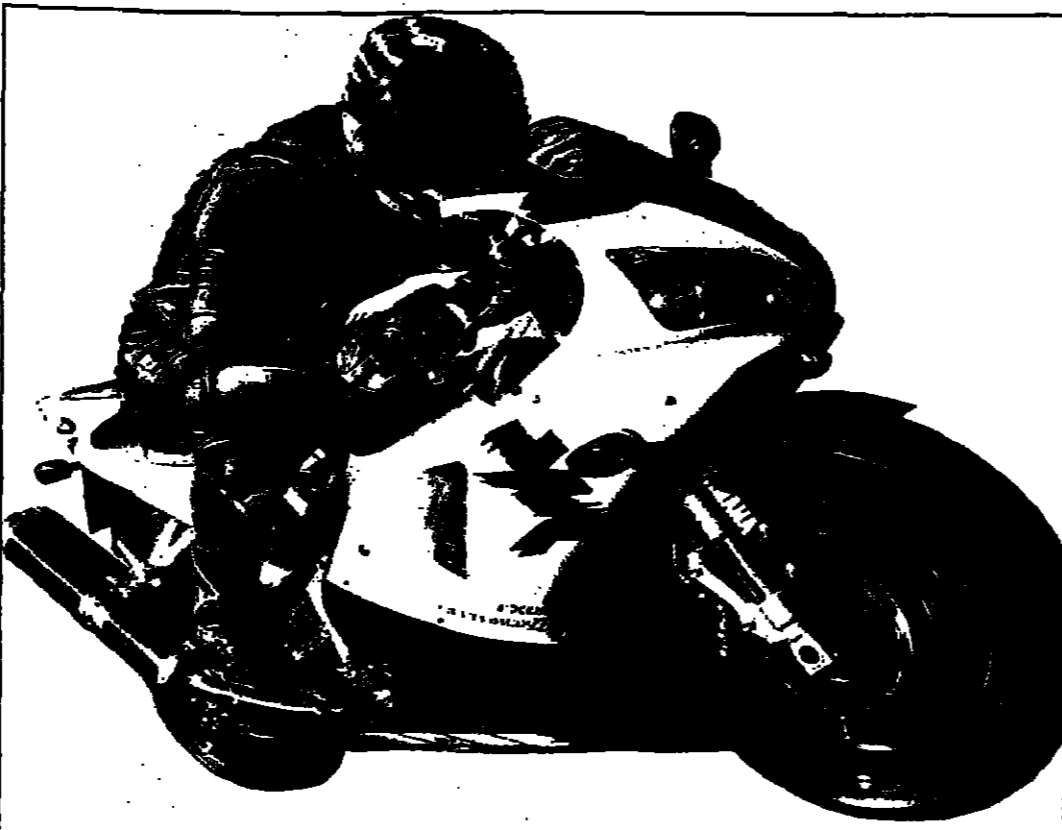
When the time comes for pundits in the motorcycle industry to vote for the best new bike of 1998, the traditional bout of head-scratching and heated debate - usually prolonged - will all be over in a matter of moments.

Yamaha's spectacular YZF-R1 stands out a mile, even in a vintage year that has seen, among many others, Kawasaki's best-ever street bike, the ZX-9R, BMW's improbably fast and agile R1100S and a hugely impressive first superbike, the RSV-Mille, from the rising Italian firm Aprilia.

The 998cc, four-cylinder R1 has shifted the boundaries of mass-produced motorcycle performance in a way not seen since the arrival of Honda's CBR900RR FireBlade in 1992. The Blade became a best-seller due to its power, lightweight and agility - the latest version has even prevented the R1 from taking top spot in the sales charts this year.

But with a maximum output of 150bhp and weight of just 177kg, the Yamaha is the most powerful and lightest of current superbikes. And with its sharply styled twin-headlamp fairing, it's the most visually striking, too.

Beneath the pointed-nosed plastic, the R1's design is best described as conventional with a twist. Its basic layout is the Japanese firm's familiar blend of 20-valve, four-cylinder engine and aluminium twin-beam frame. But Yamaha's engineers put the six-speed gearbox higher than normal behind the water-cooled cylinders, making the engine very compact. This, in turn, allows the bike to be short, while having a long rear-swing arm, as used by grand prix bikes for added stability.



The Yamaha YZF-R1 scores big points for its lightweight, racy combination Patrick Curtis

The R1's new engine also contributes to its innovative one-piece cylinder and crankcase assembly, which is stiffer than the conventional design and allows the power plant to be used as a stressed part of the chassis. This means that the Yamaha's new frame needs to be substantially less strong, which helps to explain how this bike can weigh less than most 600cc sportsters.

The R1 engine is a spectacular performer in its own right, never mind its contribution to handling. The bike feels light and racy from the moment you climb aboard, with low, narrow handlebars, high foot-pegs, a firm seat and the smallest of windscreens. And such is the motor's gloriously broad spread of power that the moment you open the throttle, the R1 rips forward as though fired from a cannon.

It's not so much the fearsome acceleration when screamed towards its 11,750rpm red line that makes this bike so exciting; but the far less rarely approached - even on a race-track - top speed of about 170mph.

Where the R1 engine really scores is in its flexibility, which ensures that smooth, addictive, strong acceleration is always available, making this a supremely easy bike to ride quickly, even on an unfamiliar road.

of light weight, rigidity, racy dimensions and excellent suspension give it the feel of a much smaller, yet perfectly balanced machine.

Whether you're carving through a high-speed bend at Cadwell Park - on one of the "track days" that are becoming an increasingly common part of a typical superbike owner's riding - or pottering along the high street in the rain, the R1 is manageable and well-behaved.

Its brakes are arguably the best in the bike world, combining fierce power with plenty of feel. Detailing is generally good, notably the excellent instrument console, which combines a large digital speedometer and traditional analogue rev-counter with the welcome addition of a clock. The list price of £9,499 on the road is competitive, too, and would put the R1 on a par with its main rivals in the showroom were it not for the fact that discounts are less readily available.

Despite all that the R1 is not a bike for everyday use. It's racy, single-minded, hopelessly uncomfortable for a pillion, and shares the normal hyper-bike hunger for consumables such as tyres and brake pads. More to the point it's so fast and furious that even some experienced riders would find their needs better met by the slightly less challenging ZX-9R or FireBlade - which, ironically, suddenly finds itself cast in the role of sensible option.

Alternatively, some riders might prefer to wait for the similarly styled but less powerful and cheaper 750 and 600cc versions of the R1 that are due to be unveiled at the big European bike show in Munich next month.

Having claimed its place on the superbike throne, the YZF-R1 is already setting about establishing a two-wheeled dynasty.

IF YOU wonder why the motor industry is bad at customer service, then take a quick look at the car-buying practices of most top executives.

None of them buy their own cars, or can even boast of purchasing one for at least a decade. Indeed, the boss of one of the world's biggest car companies recently admitted that he had never bought one.

They don't run cars, either. Petrol and servicing are paid for and when a car is six to 12 months old it is often replaced. Basically, car company bosses have about as much understanding of car buyers as John Prescott has of public transport commuters, or as the Queen has of life in middle England.

Bosses rarely visit dealers, and never observe real-life customers going through real-life haggling, buying, servicing and complaining.

Few meet customers, except by accident or at corporate junkets for large fleet buyers. In fact, few company bosses, no matter what the industry, go out and buy their own goods. As with car bosses, most get them for free. But at least many bosses have first-hand experience of how their own customers behave.

Marks & Spencer, an exemplar at connecting with its customers, encourages its executives to shop at its stores. Airline executives fly their own carriers, restaurant owners eat at their own restaurants, and the heads of small companies meet customers because if they didn't no one else would.

But not car company chiefs. They sit in their ivory towers, protected by over-zealous secretaries and fawning middle management, who are charged with relaying "what the customer thinks" through research that is often as verbose as it is out of date.



GAVIN GREEN

Car bosses have about as much understanding of typical car buyers as the Queen has with life in middle England

It isn't just the car bosses who fail to meet, or relate to, their customers. It's most of the car workforce. All middle managers get company cars, which are frequently changed and serviced by the car company's in-house garage. In other words, they rarely - if ever - go to dealerships.

Customer interaction is instead left to the dealers, most of which are independently owned and trained to "sell, sell, sell" rather than "help, help, help".

Little wonder that an outside firm such as Daewoo can come into Britain and quickly grab a sizeable chunk of the market, purely because it seems to understand what customers want - which is no commission-hungry salesman, courtesy vehicles provided when cars are being serviced and a no-hassle warranty. It certainly hasn't succeeded on the quality of its cars.

The Daewoo system has no dealers. The one benefit with their idea of direct selling, is that someone from the firm has to meet the customer.



The new Volkswagen Golf Cabrio Avantgarde: very clever cosmetic surgery

New soft-top's a smooth mover

Why has VW updated the Golf Cabriolet? The answer lies blowing in the wind, says John Simister

SUMMERTIME, and the living is breezy. That is how it is if you own a convertible, but we Britons do not seem to mind. You will not see many people driving open-top cars in southern Italy because no sun-block cream powerful enough yet exists to stave off permanent skin ruin, but in Britain we try to maximise every small opportunity. And blow the wind.

Now, a little known fact. Some Volkswagens are named after winds (Scirocco, Passat, Corrado), and a Volkswagen Golf also conforms to this logic. The golf ball gear-lever knob found in sporty versions of early Golfs is but a German pun; the reasoning behind the name is that "Golf" is how the Germans spell "Gulf", as in Gulf Stream. So there you are: a wind-in-the-hair Golf does have a windy name after all.

Why am I telling you this? Because the Golf Cabrio, as the open Golf is correctly known, has just had an update. This has come about because the mainstream hatchback Golfs have recently been relaunched as Mk4s, with an entirely new and bolder-looking body. Volkswagen has not, however, made an open version of the Mk4, merely

a visual approximation of one. What you see here is a Golf Mk4 Three-and-a-half, and a clever bit of cosmetic surgery it is.

The bonnet, the big-eyed headlights and the front bumper with integral grille are all from the Mk4, blended into the existing Mk3 centre section via some new front wings. The boot-lid no longer contains the number plate; this item has been relocated in a new Mk4-like bumper. Inside, the architecture is as before but the finishes are new, with plimpy-textured surfaces unique to the Cabrio. Mechanically, the new Cabrio is exactly like the old one, which means that the top versions keep the old eight-valve, 2.0-litre engine that powered the Mk3 GTI. These are now the only Golfs so fitted, the Mk4 having a 20-valve 1.8 instead. You might think that the Cabrio would therefore be challenged, engine-wise. You would be wrong, for the old engine, despite being closely related to that of the first Golfs of 1974, works much better than its ageing design suggests it should.

When the open-top Mk3 was launched in 1994, it amazed the car critics with its feeling of solidity and integrity. Most open conversions of hatchback cars

suffered from shakes and shudders over bumps, and all of them had a proper glass rear window with heating elements. The downside of this last attribute, though, is that the hood is bulky when folded, and has to sit on top of the rear deck where it obscures the view aft. There is proper space for four people, and the front passengers are not bombarded by excess buffeting. Those in the back have a windier time, but that goes with the convertible territory.

No one buys a convertible for ultimate driving thrills. If you seek these in a windy setting, buy a proper sports car. But there is still something relaxed and care-free about convertible cruising, and the smoother the experience, the better. This is where the Golf scores rather well. It remains the best of its type.

SPECIFICATIONS
Mark: Golf Cabrio Avantgarde. Price: £19,998 (S1000). Engine: 1.984cc, four cylinders, eight valves, 115bhp at 5,400rpm. Transmission: Five-speed gearbox, front-wheel drive. Performance: 118mph, 0-60 in 11.2sec, 29-34mpg.

RIVALS

Ford Escort 1.8 Ghia Cabriolet: £17,175. Another Karmann-constructed convertible, but not so solid. Looks and feels dated. Peugeot 306 Cabriolet: £20,445. Looks sleek but, compared with the Golf, an obvious quality shortfall. Lively and fun to drive. Renault Mégane 2.0 16V Cabriolet: £19,430. Looks racy but has minimal passenger space. Bridges gap between convertible and sports car.

The BMW that wouldn't grow on me

MY WORST CAR

STEFAN BUCZACKI'S BMW 525



The BMW 525's warning lights almost died from overwork

IT WAS around 12 years ago that I bought my worst car, and the longer I owned it, the more I grew to hate it. Surprisingly it was a BMW. Admittedly it was not a brand-new model, but then it was hardly on its last legs either, being just a couple of years old.

I mistakenly thought that a BMW was the way to go after several years of owning Volvos, which were really boring me to death. BMWs were becoming fashionable cars; more than that, everyone was telling me how reliable they were and how brilliant all these models were to drive.

Unfortunately, I never seemed to drive the car that much. On the 5 series there was a warning panel mounted in the middle of the roof that would alert the driver to a failure. Every time I switched on the ignition I tried to guess which warning light would be blinking at me next.

Electrics, brakes, engine, gearbox - you name it, it broke. Reliability is something that I must have in a car. That sounds obvious, but it really is not too

much to expect from such a prestigious and expensive car. The BMW let me down constantly.

The worst occasion was when I had parked it at Heathrow. A few days later

when I got back to the airport I could see fluid all over the ground. It turned out to be clutch fluid. I probably should not have driven the car, but I was so furious that I managed, with some

difficulty, to stick it into gear and then drive home. Later I stormed into the BMW showroom where I had bought it and ranted very loudly about my Friday afternoon car.

There was a German official from head office in there. All he did, though, was to bristle and turn red. I had to get rid of that car immediately after that. I could not have owned it for more than a year, but it was probably the worst motoring year of my life.

That experience put me off BMWs for ever. Since then I've only ever bought Jaguars and have not had a moment's trouble. It even persuaded me to indulge in my schoolboy fantasy of owning a Jaguar XK 120 sports car, so that I could have lots of open-topped fun on sunny days.

BMW's loss has obviously been Jaguar's gain.

Stefan Buczacki's 'Garden Roadshow' is on UK Style every Friday at 10pm

INTERVIEW BY JAMES RUPPERT

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ADA 921	1,650	FL 41	1,400	AL 56	2,500	PH 95X	500
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ADA 978	1,650	FL 98	1,400	AL 13	2,500	PH 52X	500
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ADA 981	1,650	FL 01	1,400	AL 16	2,500	PH 55X	500
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ADA 067	1,650	FL 87	1,400	AL 02	2,500	PH 41X	500
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PROPERTY

Normans invite a British invasion

Britons' interest
in French
homes gains
momentum,
and not just
ancient ones.
By Mary Wilson

Northern France is well known as the place to pick up an old farmhouse for next to nothing and then spend years doing it up. But you can find newly built houses and apartments there which are easy to get to for the weekend and which can be bought, moved into, locked up and left.

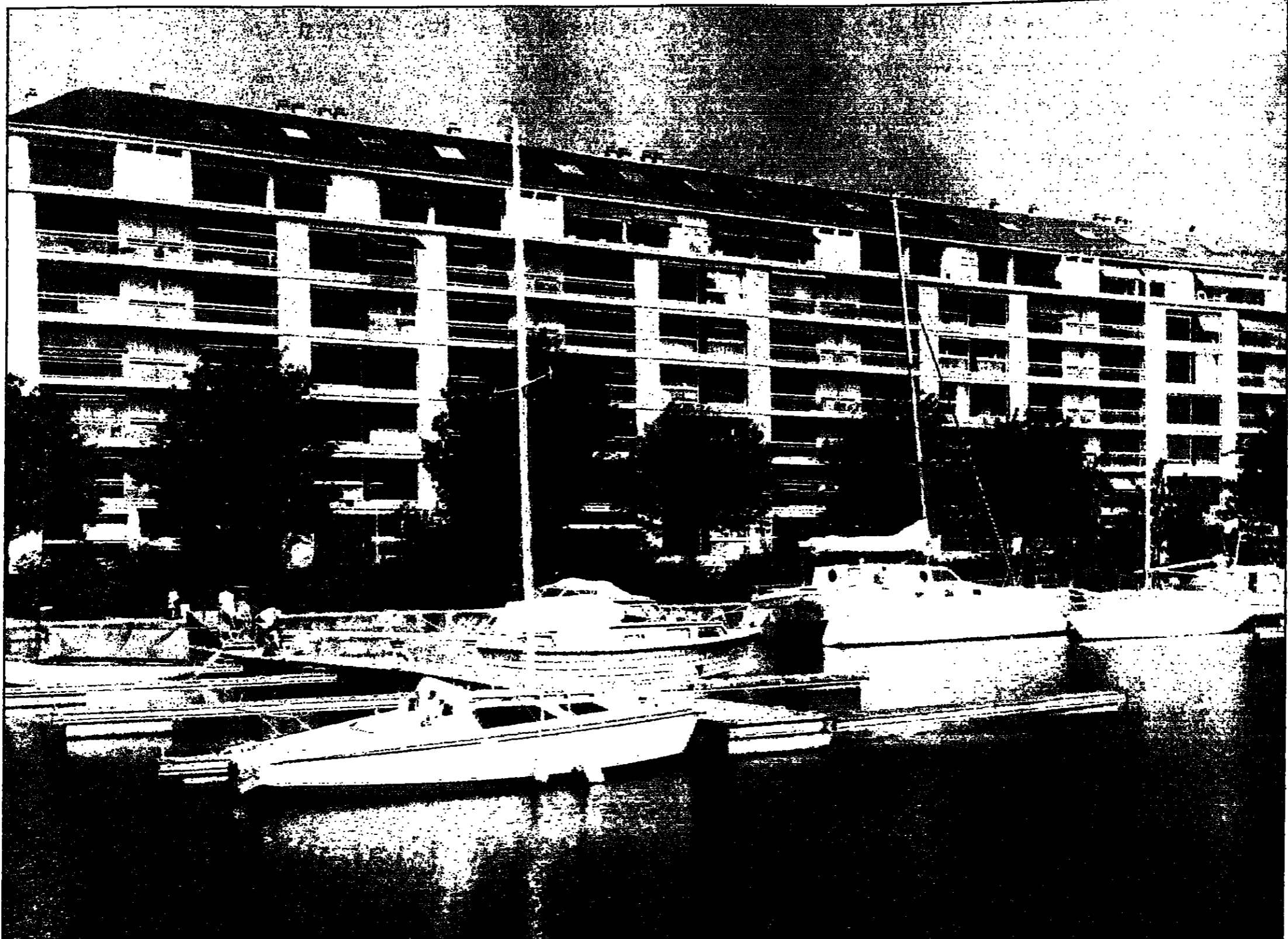
George V Loisirs, a major French property company, is developing two large sites on the coast at Deauville and Dives-sur-Mer. Both can be reached by several routes - by Le Shuttle to Calais followed by a three-hour drive; by air direct from Gatwick to Deauville; by ferry from Portsmouth to Caen followed by a half-hour drive; or by the new fast ferry from Newhaven to Dieppe, which takes two and a half hours, and then less than two hours by motorway.

Patricia Favier, of UK agents A Place in France, says: "There has been so much interest from potential English purchasers who have driven past the site that we are now running a sales campaign in the UK." Since May, about 10 properties have sold to Britons at each development, and at Deauville the company has released the second phase ahead of schedule.

Andrew and Debra Sanders, who live in Nottingham, have just bought a one-bedroom apartment at Dives-sur-Mer. He says: "We've been going to Normandy two or three times a year for about 10 years and have looked at all sorts of properties. We are not DIY types and didn't want to get into restoring something. We like the area and wanted somewhere which we felt was real France, rather than too touristy."

The properties also have rental potential. One-bedroom flats at Deauville, for example, could let for £210 a week in the winter and £260 in summer.

The development at Deauville, Le Domaine de Clairefontaine, is on a wooded site between two race courses. Properties range from one-bedroom apartments up to



Newly developed properties in Caen are being snapped up by UK buyers

Robert Harding

four-bedroom detached houses. There are two tennis courts and a swimming pool and prices are from about £47,000 to £120,000.

At Dives-sur-Mer, a pretty medieval town from which William the Conqueror set sail for England, the company is building Le Village de Port Guillaume around the harbour.

It will have shops, restaurants and bars and 1,000 homes ranging from studio apartments to three-bedroom farm-style houses. Prices are from £27,000 to £75,000.

Recently built or newly refurbished properties in northern France also are plentiful. Near Feugieres, in Picardy, Domus

Abroad is selling a restored two-bedroom cottage with two reception rooms, oak-beamed ceilings, a walled, south-facing garden and garage for £38,000. It has a cellar and a loft.

Also in Picardy, Cluttons Daniel Smith is selling La Maison de l'Abbe Prevost in Hesdin for £260,000.

This recently restored townhouse has eight bedrooms, a panelled dining room and a pretty internal cobbled courtyard.

Frank Rutherford, of Rutherford, which sells property all over France, reckons that most new coastal properties are bought as holiday homes. The agency has a selection of

apartments in attractive, newly built blocks along the coast.

A third-floor apartment, 300 metres from the beach at Cabourg - a smart resort between Caen and Deauville, has two bedrooms - kitchenette and balcony and includes furniture in the £42,500 asking price. A one-bedroom, first-floor apart-

ment about 600 metres from the beach at Blonville, just west of Deauville, is for sale for about £27,000.

A Place in France: 0170-583 2949; Domus Abroad: 0171-431 4692; Cluttons Daniel Smith: 01223-7457 441; Rutherford: 0171-386 7340.

THREE TO VIEW TO THE MANOR BORN



GLENMAYNE HOUSE, two miles from Galashiels in the Scottish borders, is a typical Scots baronial-style house, built to show off the wealth of the original owner, a wool broker called John Murray. Towers, turrets and gables give this grade A listed home an imposing skyline. There are nine reception rooms, a wine cellar, two sewing-rooms, plus 10 bedrooms. The house comes with 31 acres of grounds, including a walled garden, two conservatories and a gardener's cottage. Offers over £650,000 to Knight Frank (0131 225 8171).

YOU DON'T have to be born to greatness to assume a grand manor. Ramparts, the 19th-century wing and former billiard room to Avon Castle, is for sale at £200,000. The castle was owned by the Earls of Egremont and is south-west of Ringwood, Hampshire. To the right of the castle, Ramparts is a two-bedroom home with a drawing-room, minstrels' gallery, dining-room and study. There are views over the river from the front garden. The Avon Castle Estate is now a residential development. Lane Fox (01962 869999).



TALLENTHIRE HALL in Cockermouth, Cumbria, is a smallish but impressive period gentleman's residence, now converted into flats. Number three is reached via the main entrance and then up 39 steps. It has three bedrooms with built-in wardrobes, a 22ft kitchen/dining-room and a large living-room with a window seat and views over the gardens of the Hall. Inside a broom cupboard there is a trap-door leading to the tower. Outside there is allocated parking for two cars. £88,500 through GA (01900 826955).

Don't be dazzled by the double glaziers

The telephone rings - could it be the deadly bane of the householder, the cold-calling double-glazing salesman? Fiona Brandhorst offers a solution to nuisance sales pitches

IT WAS England vs Argentina; the whole nation was glued to the television set, apart from one double-glazing salesman. "Don't hang up on me," said the desperate caller. "Everyone's doing it tonight. I'm not a football fan, but he gave me an idea. I hung up."

These calls usually kick in at around 7pm when your tolerance level is just above zero. You know it's double-glazing, fitted kitchens or BT telling you how cheap it is to ring your granny in Greenland, because they can't pronounce your surname. And if you're a woman, you must be a "Mrs".

Direct selling is all about persistence. You've said no to basic double-glazing, a PVC front door and a conservatory. Just when you think you're off the hook, they play their trump card: "How about our soffits?"

For research purposes, I prolonged a recent call. The double-glazing company informed me that they would send "a fully-qualified surveyor to inspect my property". But why, I asked, would a qualified surveyor be selling double-glazing? Within seconds, the "surveyor" had grabbed the phone. Did I want to take advantage of a promotional offer of 40 per cent off the "usual" price if I booked an appointment there and then, or would I prefer another quote (full price, of course) that was valid for a year?

Joanne Scott, from west London, agreed to a visit from a sales rep to give her a quote for a conservatory and double-glazing. "He was so persuasive," says Joanne, who usually prides herself on being blunt when it comes to fielding sales patter. "I wasn't happy, but we found ourselves signing just to get rid of him." She cancelled the order the next day and stopped the deposit cheque.

The Consumer Protection Regulations 1987 provides a seven-day cooling-off period during which you can cancel a contract made as a result of an unsolicited visit by a salesman to your home, including appointments made after unsolicited telephone calls or leaflets, and demand the return of any deposit paid. If, however, you initiated the salesman's visit, you are not covered by the regulations.



The soft sell: is it double glazing or double dealing?

Kobal

doors in every permutation testify to successful sales pitches. And there's still plenty of virgin territory out there, where double-glazing companies are battling to get their foot in the door.

Direct marketing is hugely successful and generally reputable. According to Martin Bartle, of the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), it's a £7bn industry in Britain, covering everything from mail shots to telesales. Surely telemarketing is most unwelcome? "It's the most intrusive," says Mr Bartle. "But just because it tends to be double-glazing, it's not to say that the company isn't competent or reputable."

The DMA's 700 members cover around 70 per cent of telemarketing providers. "Our members' relationship with the customer is of the highest importance and we're here to raise the standards of our industry," states Mr Bartle. Members must obey a stringent

code of practice, giving their name and company when telephoning, and offering to call back at a more convenient moment. Disreputable companies will refuse to do this.

By calling the Direct Marketing Helpline, individuals can register that they wish to reduce unwanted telephone sales calls, mailings and faxes they receive at home. In turn, members are bound by their code of practice to make a check against the register before cold calling. It is likely that a new piece of legislation will be passed this October, making the use of a telephone preference list compulsory.

But we may well be a fickle bunch. According to Mr Bartle, most people decide not to register once they know what they'll be screening out. "The majority of direct marketing is creative, appropriate and well received," he comments.

Della Howell responded to a leaflet through her letterbox, offering a discount on double-glazing if she would agree to her house appearing in promotional literature and advertising the company on a board outside for four weeks. "The quote was only slightly less than the others I'd had," says Della. "But I thought they'd do a better job if the work was going to be photographed."

To her knowledge, the company never took photographs and the advertising board was stuck to the plaster on the front of her house for eight weeks. "I kept ringing them to take it down. Eventually it fell off, leaving four unsightly marks." She failed to get the company to repair the damage. "I was so fed up, I gave up," she says.

One former kitchen salesperson, who asks to remain anonymous, confirms that there's no such thing as a free offer. "Every 'free' hob, oven or extractor fan is built into the price." Offering a discount for a "show" kitchen to clinch a deal was part of the process. "You'd say you were ringing your manager to see if it was possible, when in fact you were talking to their answering machine."

He often found he had to think on his feet to get a sale. "As I finished my sales patter, one client thanked me but said she'd already decided on a Smallbone kitchen. I'd just been reading somewhere about the relationship between the worker and the workplace, so I asked her if they were sending an ergonomist to see her. I then spent a couple of hours measuring her in 45 different positions in the kitchen, while her husband sat there sniggering. It was pure snobbery that made her buy my kitchen."

We'd all like to think we wouldn't be taken in by such blatant flattery, and certainly we should all be more aware of our rights since the advent of TV and radio consumer programmes. But there's a flip side to every story.

One kitchen sales company used a pseudonym for customers during training. A nervous new recruit making the inevitable phone call to "head office" from her first clients' living-room, suddenly realised she'd just referred to them as Mr and Mrs Raving Bankers.

Direct Marketing Helpline: 0345 034559

JP 11/08/98

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University's real challenge

Students versus landlords. Traditional enemies. Some students are human wrecking balls in disguise, and some landlords have true Rastafarian tendencies. In reality these extremes represent a tiny minority, but the red and blue corners should nevertheless be wary of one another.

When Nottingham native John Edwards attended Coventry University, he rented rooms in various properties over the years. Returning to his room one day, he found holes where his windows used to be. "The landlord received a regeneration grant for damp-proofing and double glazing. The entire frames had been removed."

Mr Edwards resolved the matter by amicably negotiating a rent-free period during the renovation. "Fortunately, the work was quickly done, and it helped me financially."

A student at University College London had a similar surprise. Damian Harrington, who works in the accommodation office and is also a graduate student at the Bartlett School of Planning and Architecture, says: "He arrived home to discover that his landlord had erected scaffolding. The local authority had deemed a wall unsafe. The landlord gave no written notice, only verbal, and his attitude was that his tenant could like it or lump it."

The student did not have to hump

Students versus landlords. Traditional enemies. Some students are human wrecking balls in disguise, and some landlords have true Rastafarian tendencies. In reality these extremes represent a tiny minority, but the red and blue corners should nevertheless be wary of one another.

it. "We organised a solicitor's letter ordering the landlord to stop until he gave proper notice. He should have provided alternative housing," says Mr Harrington, who is writing a master's thesis on private sector accommodation.

Earlier this decade several students in separate incidents were felled by carbon monoxide poisoning from badly fitted gas heaters. Some died. The government tightened up the laws and university accommodation officers are exercising more vigilance.

David Whitlock, assistant director of student services at Coventry, says: "We have a large property management scheme in which we rent properties of various sizes from private landlords, totalling 1,000 beds. Size means clout: 'We are a major player, so we can influence prices and quality. We can also guarantee gas, fire and furniture safety.'"

Students don't have to negotiate accommodation on their own, or live alone, says Mr Whitlock.

Furthermore, "every property has to have a gas safety certificate approved by a CORGI engineer,

ty and legal rights, and some universities distribute this literature to students.

Plethora of student landlords were around in the mid to late Eighties when, instead of shelling out rent money, many parents bought a house outright and installed their son or daughter who let extra rooms to other students.

Some parents made a profit in the end. Many others at least recouped the money they would have had to spend on rent.

In 1991, a year after John Edwards graduated from Coventry and moved back to Nottingham, he bought a three-bedroom mid-terrace house in Coventry which he let to students.

He says: "I paid £34,000 and even now it is worth only £2,000 more. The market has hardly moved."

The bad times yielded good results. One year his tenants were four girls. He often visited the house and started dating one of them. He and Mandy married last year.

Bristol University 0117-928 9000; Coventry University 01203 631 313; Edinburgh University 0131-650 1000; Glasgow University 0141-339 8855; University College London 0171-387 7050; Oxford University website <http://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/accom>; Damian Harrington 0171-882 8072; Department of the Environment 0181-691 9191.



The Young Ones made student squalour hilarious - but the reality can be very different

e job
Rebecca Walling

COMPARE

HOME HELPERS

From the University of London accommodation information sheet:

- Never sign anything you do not agree or do not understand. Get it checked first. It is illegal for an agency to charge a fee to be on their list or to provide addresses of properties. They can only charge a fee once you have secured accommodation. Ask before you look.
- Who to Live With - Five is the recommended maximum. Over this size, you could find Department of Environment Regulations require the property to have more bathrooms and an automatic fire alarm.
- For your safety and security try not to visit properties alone.
- It is a legal requirement for all gas appliances to be tested annually by a CORGI registered contractor. Ask to see the gas appliances and installations certificate. If none are shown reconsider signing up.
- Are there working smoke and carbon monoxide detectors in rooms and staircases? If the landlord will not provide them - get your own and take them away when you leave.
- Try and talk over the accommodation with the previous tenants.
- A group-assured short-let tenancy is a joint tenancy, in other words with joint and several responsibility, thus all members of the group will be responsible for payment of the whole rent and other costs of the property and, you will be held responsible for non-payment of rent and other charges by co-sharers.
- Note on the schedule the general cleanliness and condition; marks on walls, carpets, mattresses and knife cuts on kitchen work tops.

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. "We can display details of rooms/flats/houses available for letting to a student or member of the university. Although we do not provide a management service and cannot negotiate the letting on your behalf." What is wrong with this quote?

a) The grammar ain't right
b) It needs a comma between "University" and "Although"
c) It needs a semi-colon between "University" and "Although"
d) It needs colonic irrigation between "University" and "Although"
e) all of the above

2. The quote in question one, which appears on the Oxford University web site, suggests that Oxford:

a) should try harder
b) is overrated
c) is resting on its laurels
d) should become a polytechnic
e) all of the above

3. University administrators are obsessed by carbon monoxide, and want students to be obsessed by it, because carbon monoxide is:

a) colourless
b) odourless
c) tasteless
d) a killer
e) all of the above

HOT SPOT EARLSFIELD Sweet, comfy and close to the city

EARLSFIELD HAS good reasons for being obscure. This south-west London village is small in area, and what little land there is has been given over to gas and electricity works, light industry, council estates, more cemeteries than you could shake a stick at - and plenty of period houses. Earlsfield is surrounded by neighbours like Wandsworth Common, Balham, Wimbledon and Southfields.

Put it all together and Earlsfield has only one way to go - up. This northerly drift is partly propelled because Earlsfield attracts people priced out of posh neighbours and others as far afield as Battersea, Clapham and Fulham.

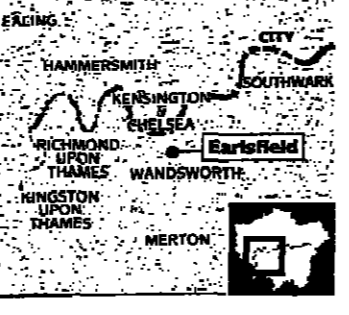
Property prices are already heaven-bound, says Julia Arnold, an independent property marketing consultant who, with husband Andrew, owns a three-bedroom Victorian terrace with moderately-sized garden in Earlsfield.

"Prices started rising about two years ago, and I am starting to see more professional people in the area, more BMWs and convertibles. But Earlsfield is still much more affordable than surrounding areas." Her list of surrounding areas includes Fulham, a welcome reminder that, despite the "south London" label, Earlsfield is barely south of the



Cherish Earlsfield village's obscurity while you can - it is gaining in popularity Neville Elder

Thames. Wandsworth High Street is within long walking distance. Under the right-to-buy scheme, council properties have enabled many middle-class and working-class people to get a foot on the ladder. The large number of ex-council properties in Earlsfield may appeal to the buy-to-let set as well as to first-timers. "The two-bedroom and three-bedroom Victorian and Edwardian homes are excellent



investments for buyers wanting to let," says local estate agent Ben Shapland, of Tower Property Services. He says three-bedroom Thirties ex-council houses are selling in the region of £150,000, although some sharply lower prices are occasionally seen. The newer council properties, built since 1960, are cheaper still, down to around £100,000. Period flats start at about £100,000, but ex-council flats can be

had for barely more than £50,000. Mr Shapland recommends avoiding the ex-council properties in the large tower blocks: "It is hard to get a mortgage, and hard to resell."

Victorian and Edwardian houses can top £200,000 but they don't go much above £250,000, because the houses themselves usually don't have more than three bedrooms.

Mr Shapland describes Earlsfield as a "sweet area, a chimney-pot kind of place". Crime and personal safety don't seem to be more of an issue than in any other part of London. The Wimbledon side of Garratt Lane is dominated by warehouses and train depots, and no amount of adjacent gentrification will alter this imposing implacable industrial landscape.

The many cemeteries in the area are hardly decorative. "Many of my neighbours are older people who have lived here for between 30 and 60 years," Mrs Arnold observes. "But they are slowly being replaced by young professionals, and the neglected shop fronts are being painted as the shops themselves are transformed into wine bars, delicatessens and specialty shops."

But BMW owners are not all good news, laments Mrs Arnold: "It's becoming harder to find parking."

ROBERT LIEBMAN

Strength: From Earlsfield Station, the next station up is Clapham Junction, and down is Wimbledon. Waterloo is 10 minutes away. Buses along Garratt Lane link to the Northern Line at Tooting Broadway; the District Line is at Wimbledon.

Weakness: Has no big, even biggish houses. Buyers needing large family homes are restricted to Wandsworth Common and Wimbledon.

Parks: Another Earlsfield plus: sports grounds, sports centres and parks dot the area, making it ideal for tennis, jogging, bicycling, and

playground activities for young children. Golf courses are in Wimbledon, as is the All England Tennis Club. **Council tax:** Lowest in the country. Band A = £202; Band H = £637.

Where are the doggies? Wimbledon Stadium is on the southern edge of Earlsfield in an even more obscure district - Summerstown. **Plough Lane RIP:** A quarter of a mile southeast of Wimbledon Stadium is the ground which used to be home to Wimbledon Football Club. **Bangers and smash:** Car races - we drive 'em, you watch us smash

THE LOW-DOWN

'em - are at Wimbledon Stadium, also home to an outdoor market. Send it to forensics: An advance wave of snoots seems evidenced by Rawle & Son saddlery and riding shop on Garratt Lane. Station Delicatessen is, as its name indicates, a deli, not a grocery, and the local bakery - very suspicious - eschews preservatives. Willie Ginn wine bar serves food reputed to be eclectic and delicious. **Nice place to visit:** Think of that when you see Hunter the television Gladiator in the local wine bar. He's

just visiting a friend, who lives locally. Is the friend Ulrika Jonsson for any chance? No, she's an ex-friend. Besides, Earlsfield is not the kind of place where even mini-celebs choose to live. **Estate agents:** Craigie, 0181 874 7475; Kinleigh Folkard & Hayward, 0181 944 6464; Tower Property Services, 0181 870 8870. **Nearest chic shopping:** Found at Wimbledon, Wimbledon Village, Wandsworth Common. **Nearest ordinary shopping:** The massive Arndale Shopping Centre

on Wandsworth High Street. **Cemetery graveyard:** Across from Earlsfield Station is Wandsworth Cemetery. To the southeast is Streatham Cemetery, followed by Lambeth Cemetery, and, turning north, Gap Road Cemetery. **Surely there's a prison?** Yes, Her Majesty's Slammer Wandsworth is at the far end of the cemetery. Architecturally, it is a plus. **Surely there's a river?** The mighty River Wandle wanders parallel to Garratt Lane. It contains the kind of water which even rats try to avoid.

STEPPING STONES ONE WOMAN'S PROPERTY STORY



TV director Louise Rainbow has bought five properties since 1985. She now lives with husband Colin and their two daughters in a £160,000 house built in London's Forest Hill.

LOUISE RAINBOW took her first plunge into property in 1985 with her then boyfriend, and bought a two-bedroom Brixton flat for £20,000. At 26 she was the first of her peers to buy, because: "At the time it was cheaper than renting." The relationship broke down but the purchase proved auspicious when it came to selling. The abolition of joint tax relief on mortgages caused steep price rises and panic. In March 1988, a prospective buyer offered £68,000 but pulled out. Two months later the flat sold for £78,000 - a profit of £58,000.

Louise put her £25,000 towards a "two-up, two-down" in East Dulwich, bought for £90,000. She married Colin and the small house was fine until they discovered: "I was pregnant with twins."

The market slumped and falling prices prompted fears that selling would leave them with little deposit for their next purchase. In 1991 a refurbished, Victorian four-bedroom semi with two bathrooms and a small garden came on the market in nearby Forest Hill for £106,000, and Louise and Colin sold their East Dulwich home for £84,000 opting for size over location. **Twins Madeleine and Georgia** went to the local school, but

gradually Louise became disenchanted: "We realised there were nicer pockets within Forest Hill and the garden was never going to get any bigger." Advantageous mortgage deals and Louise's decision to free-lance prompted their "now-or-never" decision.

In 1996 they sold their Victorian four-bed for £110,000 and bought a detached three-bedroom house closer to the school but firmly "on the other side of the tracks" for £106,000. A desirable hill-top location and bigger garden convinced them it was worth sacrificing a bedroom and bathroom for.

Local agent, Robert Stanford, says prices in the area have risen by about 40 per cent since 1996 giving the house a value of £160,000.

GINETTA VEDRICAS

If you would like your moves to be featured in Stepping Stones, write to us at Your Money, The Independent, One Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL.

THOSE MOVES IN BRIEF

1985 - bought Brixton flat for £20,000, sold for £78,000 in 1988.
1988 - bought East Dulwich two up, two down for £90,000 sold for £84,000 in 1996.
1991 - bought Forest Hill four bed semi for £106,000, sold for £110,000 in 1996.
1996 - bought fifties detached house for £106,000, now worth over £160,000.

